

FeLV: Understanding Feline Leukemia Virus

CAC COMMUNITY EDUCATION • PET PARENT SERIES

FeLV is a contagious virus that can weaken a cat's immune system and contribute to serious illness. Some infected cats remain healthy for years, while others develop disease sooner.

HOW DOES FeLV SPREAD?

FeLV spreads through close contact with infected cats, especially saliva and nasal secretions.

- Mutual grooming & close contact
- Shared food/water bowls
- Bite wounds
- Mother to kittens

FeLV does not infect people.

TESTING: FeLV is commonly screened for with a blood test.

Consider testing:

- Newly adopted or untested cats
- Cats with outdoor access
- Cats exposed to an FeLV-positive cat
- Cats with unexplained illness

Positive results or recent exposure may require follow-up testing.

CARING FOR AN FeLV+ CAT

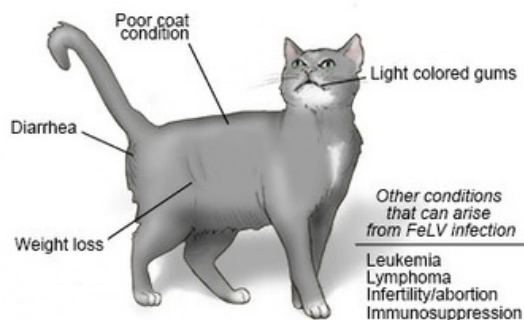
- Keep indoors and away from uninfected cats
- Maintain regular veterinary & dental care
- Feed a complete, balanced diet
- Monitor weight, appetite, behavior & overall health
- Have illness evaluated promptly

PREVENTION

An FeLV vaccine is available for cats at risk of exposure. Ask your veterinarian whether vaccination is appropriate for your cat.

REMEMBER

FeLV-positive does not automatically mean immediate illness. Work with your veterinarian to confirm results and develop an individualized care plan.



<https://www.vet.cornell.edu/departments/cornell-feline-health-center/health-information/feline-health-topics/feline-leukemia-virus>
References: Cornell Feline Health Center • AAFP Feline Retrovirus Guidelines

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