

FELINE LEUKEMIA VIRUS/FELINE IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS

WHAT IS FELINE LEUKEMIA VIRUS/FELINE IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS?

SPECIES/AGES AFFECTED

Cats of all ages can be come infected.

RISK OF INFECTION/EXPOSURE

The risk of infection is higher in younger animals and cats that are in contact with multiple cats (strays). Generally, Feline Leukemia Virus (FeLV) is spread by casual contact between cats although as they age, resistance to infection develops. Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV) is spread more commonly through bite wounds or through sexual behaviour.

Exposure occurs when in contact with infected cats.

METHOD OF TRANSMISSION

FeLV is said to be a disease of friendly cats where spreading can be from mothers to kittens though the uterus during pregnancy or through milk, through shared food dishes, or by cats grooming each other. FIV may spread though bite wounds and sexual behaviour.

PREVENTION / VACCINATION

Protecting your cat from contact with cats of unknown health status will reduce the risk of exposure.

Vaccines are available. Two vaccinations one month apart and an annual booster will create a protective level of immunity in your cat.

TRANSMISSIBLE TO PEOPLE

It is not transmissible to people.

CLINICAL SIGNS

Usually there are no specific clinical signs. As the diseases progress, a predisposition to infections, like gingivitis, skin and bladder infections can be seen. Neurological signs (tremors or seizures) and cancers are associated with theses diseases.

CONSEQUENCES OF ILLNESS

Recurrent infections, cancer, and eventual death.

TREATMENT

FeLV and FIV are not treatable, although the infections associated with the diseases can be treated individually. Unfortunately, these conditions usually reoccur and can be more difficult to treat than simple infections.