

# Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV)

## What is feline immunodeficiency virus?

Feline Immunodeficiency Virus is a viral disease which affects the immune system of domestic cats and can leave them susceptible to infections and disease.

## Can the virus spread?

It is a virus which spreads from cat to cat mainly through deep bite wounds, the kind that usually occur outdoors during aggressive fights and territorial disputes - the perfect reason to keep your cat contained inside. It does not spread through sharing of food bowls and litter boxes, social grooming, or sneezing and other casual modes of contact.

## Can FIV cats live a “normal” healthy life?

Cats who are infected with Feline Immunodeficiency Virus may not show symptoms until years after the initial infection occurred. The average length of time between becoming infected, and the start of symptoms related to the virus, is seven years but may be as long as ten years.

Infected cats who receive supportive medical care and are kept in a stress-free, indoor environment can live relatively comfortable lives years before the infection reaches its chronic stages.

## How can I protect my other cats in the home?

The following measures can be taken:

- Vaccination - if your cat has been tested for FIV and their result is negative, they can be vaccinated against the virus. The FIV vaccination consists of an initial course of 3 vaccinations 2-4 weeks apart, then a yearly booster.
- Keep your cats indoors or in an enclosure to limit their exposure to other cats
- Desex your cat to decrease the chance of them roaming and fighting with other cats
- If you are introducing a new cat to your house, test the new cat for FIV first - THIS IS FREE if you adopt one of our Feline immunodeficiency virus cats