

ABOUT FELINE IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS (FIV)



WHAT IS FIV?

- Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV) is a cats-only virus that is very similar to HIV in humans
- FIV infection cannot be eliminated in a cat, but the cat may live symptom-free for a very long time or a normal life span.
- There are no proven treatments to rid a cat of FIV. Most FIV-positive cats handle the disease well, but it is important to concentrate on treating the secondary illnesses.
- The most common screening test is an ELISA test (often called a SNAP test) done by your veterinarian

CAN FIV–NEGATIVE AND FIV–POSITIVE CATS LIVE TOGETHER?

- Yes, as long as the cats get along and do not fight. The risk that an FIV-positive cat could spread the virus to an FIV-negative cat can be minimized by having them live in separate rooms until you are confident that they will not fight with each other.
- Spaying or neutering your pets will also reduce any risk.

CAN FIV–POSITIVE CATS HAVE A GOOD AND LONG LIFE?

- Yes, FIV-positive cats can live normal lives, both in quality and duration. They just need to be monitored for infections and dental issues. But if they're well cared for, they can be healthy, happy, wonderful pets.

The most common route of infection is a deep bite wound from an FIV-positive cat to another cat. It can also be transmitted via blood, in utero and from the milk of an infected mother cat. It is very rare for cats to get FIV just from being around infected cats, sharing food bowls, or from a person touching an FIV-positive cat and then touching an FIV-negative cat. Many FIV-positive cats and FIV-negative cats live together in the same home for years without spreading the virus to the non-infected cats.

There are no specific signs of FIV infection. FIV-positive cats have a weaker immune system, so they are more prone to getting infections, such as upper respiratory infections, ringworm and dental disease. Other than that, FIV-positive cats tend to live normal lives and have a normal length of life.

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