



YOUR CAT'S HEALTH, OUR PASSION • VOLUME 4, ISSUE 6 • JUNE 2012 NEWSLETTER

## FELINE IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS (FIV)

Feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV) is a slow-acting virus (called a *lentivirus*) that affects domesticated felines worldwide. It is sometimes referred to as feline AIDS.

FIV is often misunderstood, and is sometimes confused with FeLV (feline leukemia virus). A diagnosis of FIV is by no means a guarantee that a kitty will have a shortened life expectancy.

Over time, FIV weakens a kitty's immune system, making her or him more susceptible to secondary infections which the immune system might normally fend off.

FIV is transmitted primarily through deep bite wounds; it does not appear to be transmitted by casual contact such as shared food bowls and litter boxes, social grooming, and other non-aggressive interaction. In multi-cat households where a FIV-positive kitty lives with non-FIV kitties, as long as the housemates do not fight, there is little risk of transmission.

Another, though far less common, mode of transmission is from an FIV-infected mother cat to her kittens, either in utero or when nursing.

FIV cannot be transmitted from a cat to a human or to any other species; it is strictly a feline virus.

Cats who have contracted FIV may not show symptoms for months, or even years, after initial infection. A range of symptoms may ultimately appear, including fever, enlarged lymph nodes, inflammation of mouth or skin, neurologic signs, weight loss, or diarrhea. FIV is diagnosed with lab-work which tests for the FIV antibody in the blood.

Because FIV weakens your kitty's immune system, once diagnosed, it is important to work closely with your veterinarian to develop a health management program that supports immune function. This may include a change of diet along with vitamins, antioxidants, Omega fatty acids, and supplements. It's important to promptly treat infections or other conditions should they occur. Kitties with FIV should be kept indoors to help decrease their risk of contracting illness or infection from outside sources or other cats.

Although there is no cure for FIV, kitties who receive supportive medical care and who live in a stress-free, indoor-only environment can live a happy, full, normal lifespan with few or no apparent health problems resulting from the virus.

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## STUFFED ANIMAL VETERINARY CARE

To our younger clients, a stuffed animal can be a very important family member. We believe that pets of all species, sizes, colors—and materials!—deserve regular veterinary care.

When you come to your next appointment at our office, we invite your child to bring along their favorite teddy bear or other stuffed animal. An experienced veterinarian will perform a complementary physical exam on the pet, including weight check, listening to the heart, examining eyes and ears, and assessing overall health. Once the exam is complete, your child will be given a Health Record detailing the vet's findings.

And if your child would like to adopt a new (stuffed) family member, there may be the perfect furry critter staying with us who would love to have a new home. (Stuffed animal adoptions are available free of charge while supplies last.)

## FELINE FLEA CONTROL

The hot weather is here again, and along with it lots of fleas, who seem to thrive in hot, humid temperatures.

In addition to giving painful, itchy bites to furry and non-furry family members alike, fleas are carriers of a number of diseases that can affect your kitty—or you. This includes heartworms, tapeworms, Feline Infectious Anemia, and bartonella (also called Cat Scratch Disease). Some kitties suffer a severe allergic reaction to flea bites, causing them to scratch themselves raw in bitten areas.

Fortunately, there are a number of easy-to-administer monthly feline topical medications that our veterinarians can provide which will help prevent flea infestations. Please ask us for more information.

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## JUNE SPECIAL OFFER FOR OUR READERS

Through June 30, when you bring your kitty to the Sacramento Cat Hospital for an exam, receive \$25 off a combined FIV/FeLV test, a heartworm test, or a bartonella test. Save \$50 if two of these tests are done; have all three tests done and save \$75!

Please speak with one of our team members for more information.



Don't miss an issue of our newsletter! Sign up to receive each month's issue by email. To subscribe, just go to [www.sacramentocathospital.com](http://www.sacramentocathospital.com), or speak with one of our team members.

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