



YOUR CAT'S HEALTH, OUR PASSION • VOLUME 4, ISSUE 3 • MARCH 2012 NEWSLETTER

FELINE LEUKEMIA VIRUS (FeLV)

The feline leukemia virus (FeLV) is a retrovirus that causes suppression of a kitty's immune system, leading to infections and diseases of the blood that include anemia, leukemia, lymphoma, and others. It is the most common cause of cancer in cats.

The virus, which is contagious, can be transmitted from kitty to kitty via direct contact with saliva, nasal secretions, urine, or feces; from mother to kitten during pregnancy or while nursing; or from a bite wound or during mutual grooming. (Humans cannot contract the virus.)

In most environments, FeLV will not survive for long outside of the kitty. The virus can be susceptible to disinfectants, soaps, heating, and drying. It is readily inactivated in the environment within a few seconds.

Kittens, with their young immune systems, are most susceptible to contracting FeLV. Adult cats, with more robust immune systems, have a much lower rate of infection.

Symptoms of FeLV can include loss of appetite along with steady weight loss; enlarged lymph nodes; fever; pale or inflamed gums; chronic infections of the skin, urinary tract, or upper respiratory system; diarrhea; and seizures. Diagnosis for FeLV may include bloodwork, tear or saliva testing, and fluorescent antibody test.

Cats who are infected with FeLV may not immediately show signs of illness. Many FeLV-infected cats are not diagnosed until after they have lived with other kitties for quite some time. In cases like this, all of the other kitties in the household should be tested for FeLV. Because FeLV is contagious, infected and non-infected kitties should ideally be separated to help prevent transmission of the virus.

Unfortunately, there is no cure for the feline leukemia virus; care typically consists of close monitoring of health and behavior, regular wellness visits and labwork, treatment to address secondary infections or illness, and healthy diet. With appropriate care, kitties diagnosed with FeLV can remain in good health for many months, or even years, after diagnosis.

Prevention is the best defense against the feline leukemia virus. Keeping your kitty indoors, scheduling regular examinations and screenings with your veterinarian, and making sure your kitty is always up-to-date on vaccinations can help decrease the likelihood that a disease like FeLV will make its way into your home.

The vaccine for FeLV is very effective, and should be done for all kittens in their first year; booster vaccinations may be recommended for adult cats at higher risk, such as outdoor kitties. Please speak with us about a vaccination schedule that is right for your kitty.



FELINE VACCINATIONS

Vaccinating your kitty against the most common and deadly cat diseases is one of the most important ways to keep your cat healthy. A vaccination boosts your kitty's immune system by preparing it to combat a specific disease in the future.

Feline vaccinations fall into two categories: core vaccines (ones that are recommended for most cats), and ancillary vaccines (recommended by a veterinarian only for a small percentage of cats). The Sacramento Cat Hospital prides itself on using only PUREVAX non-adjuvanted vaccines. Many vaccines are adjuvanted, meaning they contain an additive to help the cat's body absorb the vaccine. Unfortunately, adjuvanted vaccines have been shown to cause inflammation or even cancerous tumors at the injection site. Any time you have your cat vaccinated, we recommend that you ask which type of vaccine is being used.

If your kitty is current on their annual exam but due for vaccinations, you can bring him or her to our walk-in vaccination clinic. Clinics are held every Wednesday and Saturday from 1:00 to 2:30 p.m. No appointment is necessary.

For more information about our vaccination clinic, including PUREVAX vaccine fees, please ask for a copy of our vaccination clinic handout.

MARCH SPECIAL OFFER FOR OUR READERS

Through March 31, receive **50% off the regular cost of a combination feline leukemia virus (FeLV) and FIV test** when you bring your kitty to the Sacramento Cat Hospital for a wellness exam. (Regular cost \$78; discounted cost \$39.) Please ask us 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, or speak with one of our team members.

Sacramento Cat Hospital • 4115 Manzanita Avenue, Carmichael • (916) 488-4161 • info@sacramentocathospital.com
Facebook: www.facebook.com/SacramentoCatHospital