



## FIV / Feline Leukemia Virus

Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV) & Feline Leukemia Virus can cause permanent infection that eventually leads to diminished function of the immune system and various clinical conditions. They are spread through close contact (most often via bite wounds), as well as from mother to kittens. The viruses are susceptible to drying, sunlight, disinfectant, detergents, and do not survive well in the open environment. However, they can persist long enough to be shared across litter boxes, and food & water bowls.

Signs are quite variable. Fever enlarged lymph nodes and lethargy are common shortly after infection, but may also be so mild they go unnoticed. Signs that may occur include;

- Intermittent fever
- Lethargy
- Infection in and around the mouth
- Wobbly gait
- Altered mental awareness
- Seizures (rare)
- Various cancers

When a sick cat is diagnosed with FIV infection, it may be difficult to determine if the presenting problem is caused by these viruses or some other disease. It is this reason that viral testing is a critical component to proactive companion wellness.

Testing is recommended in young kittens, if your cat is new to your family, exposed to another infected cat, or is at risk of exposure after escaping or being allowed to roam outside the house.

### **Important Points**

1. No treatment is proven to eliminate the infection.
2. Healthy cats that test positive for the infection do not require any specific treatment. Cats that do show clinical signs are treated with appropriate medication and supportive care for those signs.
3. Infected cats should be kept indoor and not be permitted to associate with uninfected cats. They should also not be permitted to breed, as they may pass infection along to their kittens.
4. The American Association of Feline Practitioners (AAFP) recommends a continued partnership with your veterinarian to support regular physical exams and laboratory testing for routine care.
5. **Cats infected with FIV / Leukemia may have a normal happy life for many years...with your help.**

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#### **Cincinnati Hills Animal Clinic**

8315 Montgomery Road

Cincinnati, Ohio 45236

Phone: (513) 791-0747

Email: [mypet@cincinnatihillssanitorialclinic.com](mailto:mypet@cincinnatihillssanitorialclinic.com)

Web: [www.cincinnatihillssanitorialclinic.com](http://www.cincinnatihillssanitorialclinic.com)