



# Common Feline Diseases

# FACT SHEET

## FeLV

### Feline Leukemia Virus

- Viral infection only contagious among cats.
- Spread through the saliva of an infected cat, usually from normal social behaviors like grooming and sharing food/water bowls (EASY TO SPREAD).
- Should either live in a house with no other cats, only FeLV positive cats, or cats vaccinated for FeLV (at the owner's risk, as the vaccine is not 100% effective).
- Many cats live reasonably normal lives as long as precautions are made to protect them from wounds, parasites, and other infections since their immune system is suppressed. A smaller degree of cats may develop chronic respiratory infections, chronic dental disease, bone marrow issues, or certain types of cancer at a younger age.
- Some cats can either completely eliminate the virus from their system or decrease the load enough that it remains dormant and does not cause issues.



# FIV

## Feline Immunodeficiency Virus

- Viral infection only contagious among cats.
- Spread through saliva into deep wounds – through bites (NOT easy to spread).
- Can live in a house with FIV negative cats as long as no aggression/fighting.
- NO longer referred to as feline AIDS.
- Many cats live reasonably normal lives as long as precautions are made to protect them from wounds, parasites, and other infections since their immune system is suppressed. A smaller degree of cats may develop chronic respiratory infections, chronic dental disease, bone marrow issues, or certain types of cancer at a younger age.



# FIP

## Feline Infectious Peritonitis

- Feline Infectious Peritonitis is a mutation of a coronavirus. Coronavirus itself is a self-limiting intestinal virus in cats that causes mild diarrhea and goes away on its own. It is spread through the feces.
- Studies show that up to 90% of cats are positive for coronavirus in densely housed populations, such as shelters. Meaning, the majority of our cat population has or has had coronavirus at some point.
- In some cats, especially young cats, the virus mutates into FIP. FIP can present itself in different ways, but it is a fatal disease.
- If a cat develops FIP, it does not mean the other cats in their house will develop FIP. At the point of diagnosis of one cat, their other cats have already been exposed to coronavirus and it is all dependent on their own body whether it will mutate into FIP.
- A cat with FIP cannot directly spread FIP to another cat.
- FIP can sometimes be hard to diagnose because cats often do not start showing signs until it has progressed to a severe point - at which time it will seem like the cat is declining quickly. There is not one test for FIP; it is based on several factors and physical exam findings.
- We have a protocol in place to decrease the incidence of FIP in our shelter as much as we can.
- Currently there is not an approved treatment in the U.S., however, an experimental drug protocol has shown success.



# Panleukopenia

## AKA Distemper or Feline Parvovirus

- Panleukopenia is VERY CONTAGIOUS among cats.
- This is a viral disease that attacks the intestinal lining and the bone marrow – causing very bad dehydration, diarrhea, vomiting, lethargy, and a weakened immune system.
- It can be a fatal disease. If caught early and the cat is strong enough, they can sometimes survive with supportive care.
- Cats positive for panleukopenia need to be kept separate from other cats until several weeks after resolution of signs because they are still contagious that long.
- The feline “distemper” vaccine is very protective against this.



## Additional Trusted Resources

### **Best Friends Animal Society**

<https://resources.bestfriends.org/>

### **PetMD**

<https://www.petmd.com/>

### **Alley Cat Allies**

<https://www.alleycat.org/>

## **York County SPCA** **Contact Information**

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