



Feline Forum

Courtesy of:

Feline Infectious Anemia

The parasite, *Hemobartonella felis*, destroys the cat's red blood cells causing the disease feline infectious anemia. About 10 percent of all feline anemia cases are caused by this parasite. Feline infectious anemia occurs when the blood of an infected cat is transferred to the bloodstream of a healthy cat by blood-sucking insects such as fleas, perinatally, cat bites, or blood transfusions from infected cats. Cats at greatest risk are young male cats that are prone to fighting and biting, although the disease can occur in male and female cats of any age.

The most common symptoms of the disease are depression, weakness, loss of appetite and pale mucous membranes. Symptoms are somewhat dependent on how rapidly the anemia develops. If anemia develops gradually, the cat may have considerable weight loss but appears bright and alert. If anemia develops quickly, the cat loses little weight, but is very lethargic. The rectal temperature is high (104°-105°F) during the early

stages, but will drop to subnormal in a dying cat.

Identifying the parasites in a stained blood smear is the method of diagnosing feline infectious anemia. But, due to the cyclic nature of the parasite, several blood samples may be required before your veterinarian can see the parasite in the blood smear.

Antibiotics usually are administered for three weeks to treat the disease. Additionally, a glucocorticoid may be prescribed to treat immune-mediated injury to the red blood cells. Unfortunately, no drug totally eliminates the parasite from infected cats, and consequently recovered animals remain chronically infected.



When Cats Eat Plants

Cats frequently eat grass. Therefore, it is not surprising that cats may eat house plants. Plant eating can have serious consequences for the cat because many house plants are poisonous. If you don't want to choose between having house plants and having cats, perhaps the best solution is to have only plants that are safe for cats to eat. You may be able to get that information from your veterinarian, local pet stores or nurseries.

How Smart are Cats?

Everyone wants their favorite pet to be the smartest. Certainly cats are intelligent. They have been smart enough to manipulate millions of people into feeding and caring for them.

Cats learn to operate on their environment, a form of learning called "operant conditioning". For example, in one study cats learned to select and pull a string to which a food was attached from among several other strings.

Observation or imitation is one way in which cats learn. For ex-

ample, cats watching another cat press a bar to obtain food learned to press the bar much faster than cats that did not observe a trained animal. Kittens also learn by observation. Studies show that they learn more readily by watching their mothers than by watching another adult cat.

Any cat fancier will attest to the intelligence of the cat. But, having a better understanding of how cats learn can be invaluable to the cat owner.

The information for *Feline Forum* has been prepared by the Cornell Feline Health Center, Cornell College of Veterinary Medicine, Ithaca, NY. Copyright 1992.



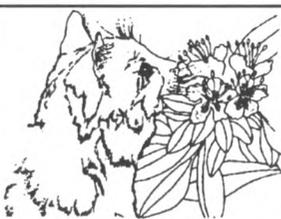
How Smart are Cats?

Everyone wants their favorite pet to be the smartest. Certainly cats are intelligent. They have been smart enough to manipulate millions of people into feeding and caring for them.

Cats learn to operate on their environment, a form of learning called "operant conditioning". For example, in one study cats learned to select and pull a string to which a food was attached from among several other strings.

Observation or imitation is one way in which cats learn. For example, cats watching another cat press a bar to obtain food learned to press the bar much faster than cats that did not observe a trained animal. Kittens also learn by observation. Studies show that they learn more readily by watching their mothers than by watching another adult cat.

Any cat fancier will attest to the intelligence of the cat. But, having a better understanding of how cats learn can be invaluable to the cat owner.



When Cats Eat Plants

Cats frequently eat grass. Therefore, it is not surprising that cats may eat house plants.

Plant eating can have serious consequences for the cat because many house plants are poisonous. If you don't want to choose between having house plants and having cats, perhaps the best solution is to have only plants that are safe for cats to eat.

You may be able to get that information from your veterinarian, local pet stores or nurseries.



Feline Infectious Anemia

The parasite, *Hemobartonella felis*, destroys the cat's red blood cells causing the disease feline infectious anemia. About 10 percent of all feline anemia cases are caused by this parasite. Feline infectious anemia occurs when the blood of an infected cat is transferred to the bloodstream of a healthy cat by blood-sucking insects such as fleas, perinatally, cat bites, or blood transfusions from infected cats. Cats at greatest risk are young male cats that are prone to fighting and biting, although the disease can occur in male and female cats of any age.

The most common symptoms of the disease are depression, weakness, loss of appetite and pale mucous membranes. Symptoms are somewhat dependent on how rapidly the anemia develops. If anemia develops gradually, the cat may have considerable weight loss but appears bright and alert. If anemia develops quickly, the cat loses little weight, but is very lethargic. The rectal temperature is high (104°-105°F) during the early stages, but will drop to subnormal in a dying cat.

Identifying the parasites in a stained blood smear is the method of diagnosing feline infectious anemia. But, due to the cyclic nature of the parasite, several blood samples may be required before your veterinarian can see the parasite in the blood smear.

Antibiotics usually are administered for three weeks to treat the disease. Additionally, a glucocorticoid may be prescribed to treat immune-mediated injury to the red blood cells. Unfortunately, no drug totally eliminates the parasite from infected cats, and consequently recovered animals remain chronically infected.



Feline Infectious Anemia

The parasite, *Hemobartonella felis*, destroys the cat's red blood cells causing the disease feline infectious anemia. About 10 percent of all feline anemia cases are caused by this parasite. Feline infectious anemia occurs when the blood of an infected cat is transferred to the bloodstream of a healthy cat by blood-sucking insects such as fleas, perinatally, cat bites, or blood transfusions from infected cats. Cats at greatest risk are young male cats that are prone to fighting and biting, although the disease can occur in male and female cats of any age.

The most common symptoms of the disease are depression, weakness, loss of appetite and pale mucous membranes. Symptoms are somewhat dependent on how rapidly the anemia develops. If anemia develops gradually, the cat may have considerable weight loss but appears bright and alert. If anemia develops quickly, the cat loses little weight, but is very lethargic. The rectal temperature is high (104°-105°F) during the early stages, but will drop to subnormal in a dying cat.

Identifying the parasites in a stained blood smear is the method of diagnosing feline infectious anemia. But, due to the cyclic nature of the parasite, several blood samples may be required before your veterinarian can see the parasite in the blood smear.

Antibiotics usually are administered for three weeks to treat the disease. Additionally, a glucocorticoid may be prescribed to treat immune-mediated injury to the red blood cells. Unfortunately, no drug totally eliminates the parasite from infected cats, and consequently recovered animals remain chronically infected.



When Cats Eat Plants

Cats frequently eat grass. Therefore, it is not surprising that cats may eat house plants. Plant eating can have serious consequences for the cat because many house plants are poisonous. If you don't want to choose between having house plants and having cats, perhaps the best solution is to have only plants that are safe for cats to eat. You may be able to get that information from your veterinarian, local pet stores or nurseries.



How Smart are Cats?

Everyone wants their favorite pet to be the smartest. Certainly cats are intelligent. They have been smart enough to manipulate millions of people into feeding and caring for them.

Cats learn to operate on their environment, a form of learning called "operant conditioning". For example, in one study cats learned to select and pull a string to which a food was attached from among several other strings.

Observation or imitation is one way in which cats learn. For example, cats watching another cat press a bar to obtain food learned to press the bar much faster than cats that did not observe a trained animal. Kittens also learn by observation. Studies show that they learn more readily by watching their mothers than by watching another adult cat.

Any cat fancier will attest to the intelligence of the cat. But, having a better understanding of how cats learn can be invaluable to the cat owner.

