



Feline Forum

Courtesy of:

FIV Threatens Health of Cats

Feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV) is a newly recognized feline virus. Although it is in the same family of viruses (retroviruses) as feline leukemia virus, FIV does not cause cancer and is not classified in the same subfamily of retroviruses as feline leukemia. FIV is in the lentivirus subfamily, along with the viruses causing progressive pneumonia in sheep, infectious anemia in horses and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) in humans. (Although FIV is structurally similar to AIDS, it is a highly species-specific agent. There has been no evidence of human infection from FIV, or vice versa.)

The primary mode of transmission of FIV is unknown, but bite wounds are a likely possibility. Casual, nonaggressive contact among cats does not appear to be an efficient means of spreading the virus.

The signs of FIV infection are diverse because they involve an array of secondary infections. Some signs include poor coat condition, loss of appetite, fever (103°F), and recurrent infections of the skin, urinary bladder, and upper respiratory tract.

Diagnosis is based on the cat's history, clinical signs, and results of an FIV-antibody test. A positive FIV-antibody test indicates that a cat is infected with FIV. It is recommended that FIV-positive cats have no contact with non-infected cats. If a cat is infected with FIV there is no drug that will cure the disease. However, your veterinarian

can prescribe drugs to control secondary infections, inflammatory conditions such as gingivitis, and weight loss. Currently, there is no vaccine available to protect cats against FIV infection.

Vaccinate Your Cat

The incidence of feline infectious diseases has been reduced significantly through the use of vaccines. Vaccines contain adjuvants (substances that enhance the immune response) and the infectious agent either as modified live or inactivated. After a vaccine is given, the animal's immune system responds by producing antibodies against the modified or inactivated vaccine.

All cats should be immunized regularly against feline panleukopenia, feline viral rhinotracheitis, feline calicivirus, and rabies. Vaccination against chlamydia and leukemia should be done according to your veterinarian's recommendation.

There is always a slight risk of serious adverse side effects occurring from vaccination. However, the benefits in most instances far outweigh the risks. General contraindications for most vaccines are that they should not be used in cats that are currently ill, pregnant, or being treated with immunosuppressive drugs.

How Do Cats Purr?



One scientific theory states that there are three phenomena that occur in the larynx to produce the purring sound. First the larynx opening closes slightly, creating increased pressure and air resistance. Then there is rapid opening of the vocal cords, releasing the pressure. The rapid change in pressure causes air vibrations, thus resulting in the purring sound. The rapid and regular activation of muscles in the throat and diaphragm creates the initial air turbulence. The whole sequence occurs very quickly, within thirty to forty milliseconds.

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