

Feline Leukemia



What is feline leukemia?

What is it?

Feline leukemia is a deadly disease that affects only felines and is transmitted through their feces, urine, saliva, nasal discharge, and other bodily fluids. This disease is highly contagious and can infect both your indoor and outdoor cat.

Symptoms?

Symptoms include, **diarrhea**, lack of **energy**, lack of **appetite** and a **decrease in water consumption**. If your cat begins to lose weight or doesn't act like its usual self, it may be time to call your veterinarian.

Risks?

Young kittens and cats that go outdoors are most at risk. It is also important to test a newly adopted cat for feline leukemia before introducing him into the household. If infected, the new cat could easily transmit this disease to other cats in the home.

Documents were developed by Jessica Hammer, as part of her thesis requirement for Barrett, the Honor's College at ASU, with support from mentoring veterinarians.

Prevention through vaccination is the best way to protect your pet from this disease.

Read on to learn more about prevention, diagnosis, and treatment.

Prevention through Vaccination

Diagnosis of Feline Leukemia

If your cat is demonstrating any of the symptoms above it is important to bring him/her to the veterinarian for testing. After examination, your veterinarian will determine if feline leukemia is a concern and run a blood test that takes only a few minutes to complete. Depending on the patient, your veterinarian may also run a blood test that needs to be sent to an outside lab for processing.



Treatment of Feline Leukemia

There is no single treatment to cure feline leukemia, however your cat can lead a fulfilling life if symptoms and secondary illnesses are controlled. Feline leukemia makes your cat more susceptible to other diseases, therefore it is important to keep your cat as healthy as possible. Upon returning home, your cat should be separated from other cats in the household and kept indoors. It is important to remember that though feline leukemia is not a disease that can be "cured" it is a disease with which your cat can live a long and happy life.

Recovery from feline leukemia is never fully achieved. Once infected, your cat will always have the disease however if secondary health issues are promptly addressed and controlled it is possible for him to live a long and happy life for many years to come

How this deadly disease be prevented?

A specific vaccination protocol must be followed in order to properly protect your pet from this disease. Follow the guidelines below to make sure your pet is fully protected.

First Vaccine

Your veterinarian will most likely administer the first vaccine at 6-8 weeks of age.

Kitten Series

After receiving the first vaccine your kitten will receive a booster vaccine 2-3 weeks after the initial vaccination.

Adult Vaccines

During adulthood cats that go outdoors should be vaccinated **yearly** or every **three years** depending on the type of vaccine your veterinarian is using.

Unvaccinated Adults

If you have an adult cat with no vaccine history, your veterinarian will most likely begin with a series of vaccines 2-3 weeks apart, and then transition to the adult vaccines guidelines.