



# Factsheet – Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV)

**Feline AIDS is caused by infections with Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV). It is a viral disease which affects the immune system of cats, and can be potentially fatal. It is important to have your cat vaccinated against FIV from their very first immunisations as a kitten and continued yearly for the entirety of their life span.**

## What is FIV?

FIV destroys the immune system and leaves the cat extremely susceptible to infections and diseases. As the disease progresses, eventually the immune system will become too weak to fight off other infections, and as a result this eventually leads to death.

## Common Signs and Symptoms

- 🐾 Fever
- 🐾 Loss of appetite
- 🐾 Lethargy
- 🐾 Diarrhoea
- 🐾 Swollen lymph nodes

## How is it spread?

FIV is most commonly spread through saliva when biting occurs during cat fights. It can also be transmitted by a mother cat to her kittens across the placenta or through her milk.

Although FIV is related to human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) which causes human AIDs, no human has ever been reported to be infected with FIV (Feline Immunodeficiency Virus).

## Can it be cured?

Unfortunately, there has been no successful treatment for FIV infections. The best that can be done is to be vigilant in watching for any signs of illness in a cat who has FIV and have each infection treated as they develop.

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## **Can the Pet Resort or Cattery prevent FIV?**

If your cat already has FIV, then there is nothing that the Pet Resort or Cattery can do to prevent this.

FIV is most commonly spread by saliva. Often, cats are carriers of FIV and their owners are unaware. This increases the risk of passing it from one cat to another. All that a good boarding facility can do to minimise the risk is to ensure that all cats entering the Cattery are full vaccinated against FIV. Additionally, boarding facilities should always ensure that Cats have their own separate accommodations, and cats from separate families are not able to mix together.

## **How to care for your Cat if they have FIV?**

It is important to keep your cat indoors at all times, and limit your cats exposure to other cats in order to reduce the risk of catching any infection that their immune system will be unable to fight. If there are other cats in your household, have them tested for FIV and ensure that they are vaccinated against it. If your cats live together peacefully and do not fight, it is unlikely to spread to your other cat.

## **How to prevent FIV**

-  Ensure kittens receive their full vaccination schedule. The FIV Vaccination usually consists of an initial course of 3 vaccinations done 2-4 weeks apart, followed by a yearly booster every year of life.
-  Ensure the yearly booster is done regardless of your cats age or if they are indoor or outdoor cats
-  Always keep your cats indoors or in secure outdoor play areas

## **Summary of Points:**

-  **Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV) is a potentially fatal disease that interferes with the immune system**
-  **FIV leads to Feline AIDS**
-  **It is similar to humans infected with Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) but it is not the same virus**
-  **All cats should be vaccinated against FIV**
-  **FIV Positive cats should be kept separate from other cats in order to prevent the spread of the disease.**

*For more information, contact the Australian Pet Care Association anytime by emailing us at [info@australianpetcareassociation.com.au](mailto:info@australianpetcareassociation.com.au)*

*Further Factsheets can be found by visiting us at <https://www.australianpetcareassociation.com.au/factsheets/>*

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