

FELINE IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS “CAT AIDS”

My cat has been diagnosed with FIV, what does this mean?

Feline Immunodeficiency Virus is transmitted between cats by fighting and transfer of blood products. FIV itself does not cause disease; it does however depress the immune system making cats more prone to other diseases. Later in the course of the disease FIV can progress to AIDS, this is the end stage of the disease and is characterised by anaemia (low red cell count), weight loss and lethargy. AIDS is fatal.

How do I manage my cat when it has been diagnosed with FIV?

FIV cannot be treated; it can only be managed. The length of time that it can be managed will vary between cats.

- It is best for your cat to now become a completely indoor cat, or be kept in a run. This will prevent contact with other cats and the possible transmission of disease. It is important to note that some diseases are airborne and an outdoor run will not prevent this transmission.
- Ensure that you worm your cat with an intestinal allwormer every three months. If you cannot give your cat tablets then the clinic can order Profender (a topical allwormer). Products such as Revolution and Advocate should not be used to replace allwormers as they do not treat Tapeworm
- Discuss with your vet about vaccination of your cat. A cat which is kept exclusively indoors, with no other cats in the family and owners that have no contact with other cats may not need to be vaccinated. If this cannot be guaranteed your cat should be vaccinated with a killed vaccination.
- Treat any diseases promptly as they have the potential to escalate.
- Veterinary visits are recommended every 6 months. This will enable us to see diseases early in the course. It is especially important that your cat has a dental check as cats with FIV are more prone to dental disease.

Are there any treatments?

- Evening primrose oil given at 500mg once daily can help prevent the progression of the disease.
- L-lysine given at 500mg orally twice daily can help prevent progression.
- Feeding of a high quality premium cat food is ideal.