

Feline Infectious Diseases.



Common diseases that can harm your cat and why vaccinations and regular health examinations are so important. Many of the viral and bacterial diseases listed here can be avoided with preventative health care. Ask your veterinarian about vaccinations, internal parasite and flea and tick prevention that will help keep your cat healthy and happy.

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Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis (Feline Herpesvirus)

- Causes nearly half of all upper respiratory disease infections in cats.
- Transmission: coughing and sneezing from an infected cat or handler.
- Signs: sneezing, runny nose, watery eyes, and fever.
- Treatment: Good, except for young kittens and elderly cats.
- Prognosis: Antibiotics for secondary bacterial infections.
- Vaccination: Recommended for all cats.



Feline Calicivirus

- Major cause of upper respiratory infections.
- Transmission: droplets coughed and sneezed from an infected cat or handler.
- Signs: oral ulcers, limping, drooling, sneezing, fever, pneumonia.
- Treatment: Good, except for young kittens and elderly cats.
- Prognosis: Antibiotics for secondary bacterial infections.
- Vaccination: Recommended for all cats.



Feline Panleukopenia (parvovirus or distemper)

- Highly contagious virus that destroys certain cells in bone marrow, lymph tissue, intestines and brain.
- Transmission: saliva, mucus, and other secretions of acutely ill cats.
- Signs: High fever, vomiting, dehydration.
- Treatment: Aggressive fluid therapy and supportive nursing care.
- Prognosis: Can kill kittens quite suddenly.
- Vaccination: Recommended for all cats.



Feline Leukemia Virus (FeLV)

- Causes malignant tumors, anemia, suppresses immune system. Can appear healthy while infected.
- Transmission: saliva; young kittens are especially susceptible.
- Signs: acute early state is rarely detected.
- Treatment: almost always ineffective.
- Prognosis: can survive for years if no secondary diseases or lymphoma.
- Vaccinations: recommended for all kittens and older cats.



Rabies

- Acute viral brain disease that can infect any mammal.
- Cats are the most commonly reported domestic animal with rabies.
- Transmission: Via the bite of a rabid animal (often a skunk, raccoon, or bat).
- Signs: Sudden, significant change in behavior (irritability, aggression, fear), unexplained paralysis.
- Treatment: None. any unvaccinated animal exposed to rabies should be euthanized or strictly isolated immediately (follow state and local laws)
- Prognosis: Always fatal once clinical signs appear.
- Vaccination: Recommended for all cats, mandated by law.