

FIV Myths Debunked

Myth #1

The FIV test is reliable.

Fact: 20% of "positive results" are test errors. The error rate for kittens is even higher. Thousands of cats and kittens are killed daily because of test errors!

Myth #2

The FIV test shows the existence of the FIV virus.

Fact: It measures nothing but antibodies, microscopic organisms that fight the virus.

Myth #3

Kittens that test positive for FIV will *always* test positive for FIV.

Fact: "... infected mothers rarely, if ever, pass the infection to their kittens," according to Dr. Niels C. Peterson, the first to isolate FIV in 1986 and Director, Center for Companion Animal Health, UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine.

Fact: "Kittens born to FIV positive mothers are at low risk for infection, although they may initially test positive due to the presence of maternal antibodies."

"Kittens should be re-tested at 6 to 8 months as most will then test negative because the maternal antibodies will have seroreverted."

-Korel Shelter Medicine Program, UC Davis Veterinary Medicine.

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**Don't Believe
Everything You
Hear!**



Harley

Myth #4

Cats who have the virus inevitably develop the disease and die from it.

Fact: 90% of cats who actually have the actual FIV virus "will lead completely normal lives." And die from the same causes that any other cat might die from.

Myth #5

FIV+ cats will lead short, miserable lives.

Fact: FIV+ cats can and DO live long, healthy lives, if given a chance. Most live as long as their indoor counterparts and much longer than outdoor cats. Many live well into old age without symptoms.

Myth #6

The FIV virus is a serious threat to other animals because it can be transmitted by casual contact.

Fact: Modern medical research, as well as mounting empirical evidence, indicates that transmission requires serious physical interaction.

"Deep bite wounds are, by far, the primary mode of the virus' transmission."

-Julie Levy, DVM, PhD, DACVIM
Director, Maddie's Shelter Medicine Program

Fact: The virus can only live a few seconds outside the body, so sharing food and water bowls is not an issue.

FIV+ cats in multiple cat homes do not appear to spread the disease, as long as all parties are not combative. FIV Cat Rescue has had a group of 16 mixed cats (FIV positive and negative) living together for 6 years. No FIV- cat has ever become FIV+.

"The primary mode of transmission is through bite wounds. Casual, non-aggressive contact does not appear to be an efficient route of spreading FIV; as a result, cats in households with stable social structures where housemates do not fight are at little risk for acquiring FIV infections."

-Cornell University

Mating is an unknown, but possible disease vector. But not relevant if you have followed the first "rule": get your cat(s) neutered.

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