

The Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV) is a condition similar to HIV in humans, but it's specific to cats. It weakens a cat's immune system, making it harder for them to fight off infections. FIV is primarily transmitted through deep bite wounds, where the virus in an infected cat's saliva enters the bloodstream of another cat. It can also be passed from a mother to her kittens.

Affected cats may not show symptoms for years. However, once the disease progresses, symptoms can include: - Poor coat condition - Persistent fever - Infections of the skin, urinary bladder, and respiratory system - Weight loss and lethargy - Diarrhea - Seizures, behavioral changes, and other neurological disorders.

FIV is diagnosed through a specific blood test that detects antibodies to the virus. This test is quick, about 10 minutes, requiring only a small blood sample from your cat, and can be done in-house during a routine veterinary visit. If your cat tests positive, we may recommend further tests to assess their overall health and to manage the infection effectively.

There's no cure for FIV, making prevention critical. Keeping your cat indoors reduces their risk of encountering an FIV-positive cat and getting into fights. Although an FIV vaccine exists, it's not a one-size-fits-all solution, and we should discuss whether it's suitable for your cat. For FIV-positive cats, management focuses on maintaining a healthy lifestyle and promptly addressing any illnesses. Regular veterinary check-ups, a balanced diet, and keeping them indoors to avoid exposure to diseases are key.

Cats with FIV can live normal lifespans with proper care. The virus specifically affects cats and poses no risk to humans or other pet species. By understanding FIV and taking the right precautions, you can ensure a quality life for your cat, even with this diagnosis.