

Let's talk about Feline Leukemia (FeLV)

What is Feline Leukemia?

FeLV is second to trauma as the leading cause of death in cats. It can kill cats within 3 years of contraction, but 70% of cats that contract the virus can recover from it.

This virus causes severe anemia or lymphoma and acts to suppress the immune system.

How is this virus transmitted?

The FeLV virus is transmitted through saliva, feces, blood and urine. The virus does not live long outside of the body. Fighting and grooming seem to be the most common ways of transmission. Kittens can be born with the condition and can also contract it from mother's milk. It can also be transmitted by healthy cats that carry the virus.

What are the Symptoms?

- Pale gums
- Yellow colour in the mouth and whites of the eyes
- Enlarged lymph nodes
- Bladder, skin and upper respiratory infections
- Weight loss and/or loss of appetite
- Poor coat condition
- Progressive weakness and lethargy
- Fever
- Diarrhea
- Breathing difficulty
- Reproductive issues
- Stomatitis

What does this mean for a FeLV cat in our care?

All our cats are vaccinated while in care, but any cat that is showing symptoms of this disease will require isolation and has likely been brought to us with symptoms.

It is unlikely that we would have a cat available with this disease and it would become one of our palliative care cats and remain in care for the duration of its life.