



Birchwood Animal Hospital

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Top Reasons to Have Your Cat Tested for Feline Leukemia Virus (FeLV) & Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV)

- 1. These viruses suppress the immune system and can make cats very sick.*
 - Symptoms can include fever, weight loss, diarrhea, recurrent infections, enlarged lymph nodes, inflamed gums or no symptoms at all.
 - Eighty-five percent of cats with FeLV infection die within 3 years of diagnosis. Cats diagnosed with FIV have an average life expectancy of six years.
- 2. These viruses are contagious to other cats (not to people).*
 - Leukemia is easily spread from cat to cat through close contact such as grooming, shared food/water dishes or litter boxes. It can also be spread during pregnancy and less commonly through contaminated blood products.
 - FIV is generally spread through deep bite wounds due to fighting. It can also be spread sexually, and less commonly from mother to kitten and through blood products.
- 3. Cats may initially show no symptoms, but be infected and contagious. This increases the risk to other cats around them.*
 - Other cats in your household may become infected from a seemingly healthy cat. Statistically, most cats do not remain the only cat in a household so future exposure is very likely to occur.
 - Even cats that are meant to stay indoors may escape. If an infected cat goes outside it could potentially infect a number of neighbourhood cats.
- 4. Once cats are diagnosed with FeLV or FIV, treatment is available.*
 - Although there is no cure for these diseases, we can help manage their symptoms. These cats have weakened immune systems resulting in cancer, secondary infections and parasites. Regular checkups, keeping these cats strictly indoors and routine preventative care increases their chances of doing well.
- 5. Peace of mind.*
 - If your cat tests negative then there is little concern of infection. It also means your other cats at home are protected. Sometimes a followup test is advised if the test was conducted at an early age or if very recent infection is possible. This helps avoid the rare false negative test result.

