

## Frequently Asked Questions: Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV)



Our Companions Animal Rescue is committed to doing the right thing for animals. The feline virus, FIV, is often misunderstood and as a result many cats are needlessly abandoned and euthanized. This document provides you with the facts. We hope after reading this information you will choose to consider adopting a FIV+ cat from Our Companions.

**WHAT IS FIV?** FIV stands for Feline Immunodeficiency Virus which suppresses the cat's immune system decreasing the resistance to other diseases.

**WHO CAN CATCH FIV?** FIV is a feline ONLY virus. It cannot be transmitted to humans, dogs or other species.

**HOW DO CATS CATCH FIV?** FIV is transmitted mainly through blood transfusions or serious, penetrating bite wounds. Most commonly fights of this nature occur among free-roaming, unneutered tomcats defending their territory.

**CAN I MIX FIV+/FIV- CATS?** Absolutely! As with any new addition to the family, you'll want to do a slow, supervised introduction process to ensure no extreme aggression takes place. See above question.

**CAN MY CATS SHARE LITTERBOXES & FOOD?** Yes. FIV cannot be spread from cat to cat through casual contact.

**HOW LONG WILL MY FIV+ CAT LIVE?** FIV+ cats can live long, normal, happy lives. You most likely have owned a FIV cat in the past and never tested for it. Only in the last decade or so, has testing for FIV become standard practice. Many cats live long full lives without anyone knowing they have FIV.

**WHAT ARE THE BEST WAYS TO CARE FOR MY FIV+ CAT?** Keep your FIV+ cat inside to provide lower risk of contracting an illness, conduct annual checkups to monitor their health, offer vet care at the first sign of illness and provide a high quality diet as you would with any pet.

**FIV VACCINE:** Cats that have been vaccinated for FIV will test positive for FIV. Therefore, it cannot actually be determined if a FIV+ cat has the virus or if it has simply been vaccinated against it. Also, because of the positive result, we don't usually recommend vaccinating against FIV.