

Feline Panleukopenia

This is less common but still around in Northland in unvaccinated populations.

This is the feline Parvovirus. It causes fever, poor appetite, vomiting & diarrhoea, dehydration and weakness. It is often fatal in kittens.

Treatment is symptomatic, involving hospitalization on an intravenous drip, antibiotics to control secondary infection and intensive nursing care.

Prevention is by vaccinating adults and kittens as for Feline Respiratory Disease. Immunity to this vaccine tends to be better and longer lasting than to the respiratory vaccines.



Feline AIDS

Feline AIDS is a potentially fatal viral disease caused by the Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV).

It is quite prevalent in New Zealand and in particular in Northland. Between 7 and 27% of cats test positive in New Zealand. It is thought it is even more prevalent in the feral cat population.



Symptoms include fever and nonspecific malaise in the early stages of the primary infection. Later (up to 10 years later) if "Full-blown AIDS" develops there are many possible symptoms associated with the cat's reduced immune response as the virus attacks its immune system. Many types of secondary infections occur; commonly mouth infections or "Stomatitis" and recurrent respiratory infections.

Treatment once a cat has AIDS is just symptomatic; treating secondary infections. Infected cats will always carry the virus. They should be restricted from fighting with other cats and hence passing on the virus.

The virus is spread from cat to cat mainly through bite wounds.

Prevention is by management and vaccination. This is at least 80% efficient. The most effective management tools aside from vaccination are desexing and limiting indoor cats' exposure to outdoor cats.

Our recommendation for kittens who may be at risk for Feline AIDS is a course of three initial vaccine doses at 8, 10 and 12 weeks of age. These can be included in the usual vaccination course. It should be boosted annually.

We will often recommend that an unvaccinated cat presented to us for cat fight wounds comes back 8 weeks later for an AIDS test. This is because it takes that long for the cat to develop antibodies in response to infection. If the result is negative, the owner then has the option of starting a vaccination course if the cat is at risk of further cat fights and therefore contracting AIDS.

Humans cannot contract the Feline AIDS Virus.