

Feline parvovirus / panleucopenia (FPV)

Overview

- Feline parvovirus / panleucopenia / infectious enteritis (FPV) is a serious disease caused by a virus.
- FPV spreads easily between cats, and can pass to kittens in the womb.
- Symptoms of FPV include vomiting, diarrhoea and sometimes, sudden death. Kittens often suffer more serious symptoms than adult cats.
- There is no specific cure for FPV but your vet will support your cat with fluids and medicines while their body fights the infection.
- Vaccinate your kitten to protect them from FPV.



Vaccinate and give regular boosters against FPV.

What is panleucopenia / FPV?

Feline Parvovirus, also known as 'FPV', 'Feline Panleucopenia' and 'Feline Infectious Enteritis' is a nasty disease caused by a virus (similar to parvovirus in dogs).

FPV damages the guts, immune system and sometimes attacks the heart muscle. Cats with FPV become very poorly and sadly, often die.

Your cat could catch FPV directly from an infected cat or anywhere an infected cat has been. FPV often affects kittens more seriously than adult cats. If a pregnant cat develops FPV, her kittens may be born with brain damage (wobbly kitten syndrome).

FPV does not spread to dogs or humans.

When to contact your vet

Contact your vet urgently if your cat suddenly becomes poorly, especially if they're unvaccinated.

You know your cat best. If they don't have the symptoms listed above but you are still concerned it's always best to contact your vet.

Symptoms

The symptoms of FPV vary depending how severe your cat's infection is and how resilient they are to the virus. Symptoms can include:

- Vomiting
- Diarrhoea
- High temperature

- Lethargy (weakness)
- Loss of appetite
- Stomach pain
- Wobbly kittens – due to brain damage
- Death



Diarrhoea (containing blood) from a cat with FPV.

Ongoing care and outlook

Sadly, young kittens are likely to die from FPV virus. Older cats have a slightly better chance of surviving, but the condition is still very serious.

If your cat recovers and returns home, you will need to nurse them fit again – your vet will give you advice. If your cat recovers from FPV, they should return to living a normal life.

Balance and coordination problems (wobbly kitten syndrome) are common in kittens that have caught FPV in the womb. Fortunately, these kittens usually adapt to living a relatively normal (slightly clumsy), life.

Prevention

Vaccination. Fortunately, there is a FPV vaccine available – it has been so effective that FPV is now quite rare in the UK. However, unvaccinated cats are still at risk, so make sure your cat has their kitten vaccinations and boosters throughout life. Don't let your kitten go outside or mix with other cats until he/she has been vaccinated – FPV can survive in the environment for several months.

If your cat has been diagnosed with FPV, don't let them mix with other cats until they are 100% fit again.

Cost

Treatment for a poorly cat can become very expensive. Consider insuring your cat as soon as you get them, before any signs of illness start. This will ensure you have all the support you need to care for them.

It's also very important to speak openly to your vet about your finances, the cost of treatment, as well as what you think is right for your cat. There are often several treatment options so if one doesn't work for you and your pet then the vet may be able to offer another.

Published: June 2019