

Covid-19 update: At the moment, your veterinary practice may not be able to offer routine procedures such as vaccinations. Read our advice on [how to keep your cat safe if they miss a vaccination during lockdown](#).

Feline panleukopenia (FPV)

Overview

- Feline panleukopenia (*also known as FPV, feline parvovirus and feline infectious enteritis*), is a nasty virus that attacks the guts and immune system (similar to parvovirus in dogs).
- FPV spreads from cat to cat, and can pass to kittens in the womb.
- Symptoms of FPV include vomiting, diarrhoea and sometimes, sudden death.
- There is no specific cure for FPV, instead, treatment involves supporting your cat with fluids and medicines while their body fights the infection.
- Vaccinate your cat regularly to protect them from FPV.

What is FPV?

Feline panleukopenia (also known as FPV, feline parvovirus and feline infectious enteritis), is a nasty virus that attacks the guts, immune system and sometimes, the heart. Sadly, FPV often causes severe illness and sometimes death. Young kittens with FPV often



suffer more serious symptoms than adult cats, and if a pregnant cat contracts FPV, her kittens may be born with brain damage (wobbly kitten syndrome).

Cats can catch FPV by coming into contact with an infected cat, or touching an item that an infected cat has touched. FPV does not affect dogs or humans.

Fortunately, we can vaccinate our cats against FPV.

Symptoms

Symptoms of FPV vary a lot, but often include:

- [Vomiting](#)
- [Diarrhoea](#) (sometimes containing blood)
- [High temperature](#)
- [Lethargy \(low energy\)](#)
- [Loss of appetite](#)
- Stomach pain (hunching, growling, hiding away)
- Death
- Wobbly kittens (due to brain damage)



Diarrhoea (containing blood) from a cat with FPV.

When to contact your vet

Contact your vet for an appointment if your cat is showing any of the symptoms of FPV, especially if they're young or unvaccinated.

Find out whether you are eligible for free or low cost PDSA veterinary treatment by visiting www.pdsa.org.uk/eligibility

Treatment

If your cat has a very mild FPV infection, your vet may be able give out medication and advice for you to treat them at home. If your cat has a more serious case of FPV, they will need to be admitted to a veterinary hospital for treatment. There is no specific medicine to treat FPV and antibiotics don't work because it's a virus (not a bacteria). Instead, treatment involves supporting the body while it fights the FPV virus:

- **Intensive nursing and feeding.** Your cat may need intensive nursing in a veterinary hospital to keep them clean, warm, fed and hydrated. If your cat can't or won't eat, they may need to be fed through a stomach tube. They will also need to be isolated from other cats to prevent them from picking up any other infections and stop FPV spreading.
- **A fluid drip.** Your cat may need a fluid drip (fluids given straight into the blood stream) to stop them becoming dangerously dehydrated and replace the fluids they lose in their diarrhoea/vomit.
- **Antibiotics.** Antibiotics may be necessary to protect your cat against other infections during their recovery (but won't kill FPV).
- **Other medications.** Other medications such as anti-sickness and stomach ulcer medication may be necessary.

If your cat recovers and returns home, your vet will tell you how to nurse them back to full health again.

Ongoing care and outlook

A young or weak kitten is much more likely to die from FPV than an older cat that has some immunity/protection.

Cats that recover from FPV tend to return to living a normal life.

Kittens that catch FPV in the womb often have balance and coordination problems (wobbly kitten syndrome). Fortunately, although these kittens tend to be very clumsy, they usually adapt well and live a happy life.

Prevention

Vaccination. FPV vaccination has meant that FPV is much rarer than it used to be, but unvaccinated cats are still at risk so make sure you protect your kitten/cat with regular vaccinations throughout life.

Don't let your kitten go outside or mix with other cats until they have 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% healthy again.

Cost

Treatment for FPV can become very expensive, especially if they need intensive care in a veterinary hospital. It's 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.

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. Remember, you can prevent illness such as FPV by keeping your cat up to date with their vaccinations.

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