

## **FIV + CATS - THE REAL FACTS**



About 10 years ago, I saw a beautiful cat at an Adoption event. I approached him and he was a very sweet and noble cat. I wanted to adopt him. They told me I COULD NOT ADOPT HIM BECAUSE I HAD ALREADY A CAT AND THIS ONE WAS FIV POSITIVE.

Many years ago, FIV+ Cats had a STIGMA. They were carrying a sign that said “I CANNOT BE ADOPTED” – I AM A SICK CAT.

Forward to the present, many studies have revealed new information about FIV; but many FIV+ cats still carry that sign. Veterinarians, vet techs and volunteers, from lack of knowledge, treat FIV+ Cats like they are very contagious and, of course, unadoptable!

If you are a Rescue, or Veterinarian, vet tech, a volunteer or if you just work with cats, please read this article, share it, pass it around – let’s educate more and more people regarding the **REAL FACTS OF FIV+ CATS! AND LET’S GIVE THEM A CHANCE TO A BETTER LIFE!**

### **WHAT IS FIV?**

**FELINE IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS (FIV)** is a virus that affects the cat’s immune system and make it more difficult for the cat to fight off illnesses. FIV, in itself, is not fatal.

Cats with FIV often live long and symptom free lives. To better take care of FIV+ cats, they should be kept indoor, with stress free environment and a good diet.

**FIV is a CAT ONLY DISEASE.** It cannot be spread to humans or dogs or other animals. No need to panic!

**FIV IS VERY VERY HARD TO TRANSMIT** among **HOUSEHOLD CATS!** And the key word is **HOUSEHOLD.**

FIV is very common in colonies of feral cats because they tend to fight viciously to protect and keep territories. This same kind of fight rarely happens in household.

**FIV is ONLY TRANSMITTED** through **SEVERE AND DEEP BITE WOUNDS OR BLOOD TRANSFUSION.** FIV is **NOT** transmitted with a scratch or casual non-aggressive contact between cats.

FIV is **NOT** transmitted by sharing bowls, grooming each other or by a person touching an FIV+ cat and another cat who is FIV negative.

The Feline Immune-Deficiency Virus is astonishingly frail... it exist only few seconds in open air, making it even harder to transmit.

Nursing kittens can carry the **ANTIBODIES** because the mother is POSITIVE or has FIV ANTIBODIES, without being infected themselves. In fact, **NEVER test kittens younger than 6 months of age... YOU WILL END UP WITH MANY FALSE POSITIVE!** Many shelters, unaware of these test errors, perform testing in kittens and label them "FIV" which in some of them, means a death sentence. **Even more sad, some shelters will euthanize the kittens if THE MOTHER IS FIV+.**

**Testing prior to 8 months of age are:**

- Waste of money (keep it and use it for spaying and neutering)
- Waste of time (They will have to be retested)
- Serve no positive purpose
- **Irresponsible in the extreme – because the results are MEANINGLESS !! and used as a excuse to euthanize hundreds of kittens.**

"Kittens born to FIV+ mothers are at a low risk for infection, although they may initially test positive due to the presence of maternal antibodies" (Koret Shelter Medicine Program)

"Infected mothers rarely, if ever, pass the infection to their kittens" (Pederson, Niels, DR. part of the team that discovered FIV)

***I deserve to be happy too!!***

