



FIV+ Cat Facts

Cats who test positive for Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV) are often euthanized or are considered unadoptable. In fact, cats who test positive for FIV usually live long, healthy lives and do NOT infect other household pets.

FIV+ cats = Positively adoptable!

FIV is mainly passed from cat to cat through deep blood-drawing bite wounds, the kind that usually occur outdoors during very aggressive fights and territorial disputes with cats not known to each other

Casual non-aggressive behaviour does NOT spread FIV. Cats in households with stable social structures are at very little risk of acquiring the virus from each other

FIV cats can be prone to dental disease but otherwise the virus itself does not cause severe clinical signs

Myth: People can catch HIV from cats

Fact: This is not the case. You can smooch your FIV cat as you would any other cat

Myth: A cat can pass on FIV through mutual grooming, litter trays, food, & sharing water bowls

Fact: FIV cats can socialise and live happily with other cats in a multi-cat household

Myth: FIV cats will become ill and die at an early age

Fact: Multiple medical studies show that FIV cats do not have a higher incidence of illness & have the same lifespan as non-FIV cats

FIV+ cats need love too!

Purrllease spread the FACTS about FIV+ cats

Marmalade is FIV+
He's supurr cool
and has millions
of fans!



FIV cats – an overview (FIV stands for Feline Immunodeficiency Virus)

Knowing a cat has FIV makes very little difference to the cat or its owner's life.

How does FIV affect cats?

FIV gradually attacks the white blood cells of the immune system and *may eventually* make a cat less able to fight off infection. This is a very slow process and FIV cats often live as long as cats without FIV. Some FIV cats *may become* more vulnerable to secondary infections and they *may* need more dental work, but cats without FIV are also susceptible to these same ailments.

How do you know a cat has FIV? This is a tricky one...

- You can't tell by just looking at a cat. They don't know they have it, they have no symptoms & need no medication
- The test for FIV can bring back a false negative or a false positive and an FIV cat has no clinical symptoms even if you have them tested you can't trust the results

How do cats get FIV?

Most research agrees that FIV is passed on through saliva from deep bites during mating or fighting. Even then, a lot of saliva needs to be injected straight into the bloodstream of the other cat, so the risk of passing it on is small. Bites of this kind generally only occur when cats live in crowded conditions, are short of food, do not know one another and are not de-sexed. On very rare occasions FIV mothers can pass on the virus to their kittens.

Some simple facts about FIV

- FIV *cannot* be passed on through mutual grooming, litter trays, food & water bowls, clothes, shoes or hands
- The virus is fragile and only survives for a few seconds outside the body. FIV can only be spread from cat to cat in specific circumstances. It can't be spread to humans.
- Cats with FIV
- FIV cats can live happily & safely with other cats if they are all de-sexed, well-fed and introduced properly to one another - in fact having other cats around can improve their lives by reducing stress
- FIV cats get sick at the same rate as cats without FIV, and recent research has shown that they can live at least as long as other cats & sometimes longer (bear in mind all cats including those without FIV can die at a younger age from all sorts of other causes)
- Cats don't die from FIV. Cats with the FIV virus have the same chance as other cats to live long, healthy lives as long as they have a nutritious diet, are loved and are free of stress. They usually pass away from unrelated ailments or old age
- Whilst many FIV cats have good teeth their whole lives, it is not uncommon for cats with FIV to have some tooth extractions and the health of their teeth must be closely monitored

Caring for your FIV cat

- If your cat has FIV, it's important to find a vet who is knowledgeable and understanding about the virus as different vets hold different opinions. Some believe that FIV cats are not suitable for adoption; others believe they should be housed as only cats; some believe vaccinating against FIV is best; others disagree as they feel that it is not reliable and some vets are not concerned about it at all
- It's important to consult a vet when **any** cat is unwell. It is especially important be proactive if your FIV cat shows any signs of illness, as early treatment can prevent further problems
- Advice varies on whether you should keep your FIV cat indoors

♥ Love is a powerful immune system enhancer so cherish your FIV cat ♥

This sheet is a general guide only and does not constitute professional or veterinary advice. SAFE Animal Rehoming does not accept responsibility for any circumstance which may arise from reliance of the information given but always acts in the best interest of the animals

**It is important to note that different vets hold different opinions& if you take your cat to another vet their opinion may differ from that of our vet.*