

Panleukopenia



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What is panleukopenia?

Panleukopenia is a highly contagious and often fatal viral disease affecting cats. It is also known as feline distemper, feline infectious enteritis or feline parvovirus (FPV).

What are the symptoms of panleukopenia?

Cats with panleukopenia may experience vomiting, severe watery diarrhea (often with blood), dehydration, loss of appetite, fever, and lethargy. Note: These symptoms can also be caused by many other diseases.

If your foster animal is experiencing any of these symptoms, contact the AWL NSW vet clinic (Kemps Creek carers only) or your branch Welfare Officer (AWL NSW branch carers only) during business hours.

How is panleukopenia diagnosed?

Diagnosis is usually made through physical examination, and analysis of faeces for the presence of the virus and sometimes a blood test.

How is panleukopenia spread?

The virus is highly contagious and can only be spread to other cats (it cannot spread to humans, dogs or other species). It is primarily spread through direct contact (such as mutual grooming, biting or fighting between a previously healthy cat and an infected cat) or indirect contact through contaminated objects, hands, clothes, blankets, surfaces or environments.

How is panleukopenia prevented?

Panleukopenia



Vaccinating a cat and staying up-to-date with vaccinations is one of the most effective ways to protect a cat against panleukopenia. The standard F3 vaccination covers panleukopenia. Kittens as young as 3 weeks should be vaccinated every month until they are older than 16 weeks, while adults generally need 2 vaccinations followed by a yearly booster. It's important to note that no vaccination is 100% effective. However, the F3 vaccination is extremely effective and a vaccinated cat is extremely unlikely to contract the disease, even if they were to come into contact with the disease, or an infected cat.

Quarantining new cats/kittens (particularly when their history and vaccination status is unknown) in a separate room with hard floors for the first 14 days should always be done. Washing hands after patting them and keeping existing animals away from them for the first 14 days is also highly recommended.

Thoroughly clean and disinfect any areas (with a suitable disinfectant) that may have come into contact with an infected cat (including newly introduced cats/kittens), such as litter boxes, bedding, and food dishes.

How long can panleukopenia stay in the environment?

Panleukopenia can remain in the environment for several months to a year or more, depending on the conditions. The virus is highly resistant to many common disinfectants and can survive in contaminated bedding, food bowls, and other objects. Proper cleaning and disinfection practices are important in controlling the spread of the virus. A 1 part bleach to 32 parts water solution of regular household bleach (8.25% sodium hypochlorite) with a contact time of 10 minutes can kill the virus.

What is the incubation time for panleukopenia?

The incubation time (time between a cat being exposed to the virus and showing signs of the virus) is usually about 3-7 days but can be as little as 1 day or as long as 14 days. The virus may shed initially for the first few days without the infected cat showing clinical signs, in many cases.

How is panleukopenia treated?

There is no specific cure for panleukopenia, so treatment is focused on supportive care to help the cat's immune system fight off the virus. In almost every case, hospitalisation and intense support treatment at a vet clinic will be required, at least initially.

Can I foster again if I have had panleukopenia in my home?

At AWL NSW, we will usually not place kittens in a foster home where there has been known or suspected panleukopenia for at least 12 months. Fully vaccinated adults may be able to go to the foster home in a shorter timeframe.

More information

<https://www.uwsheltermedicine.com/library/guidebooks/feline-panleukopenia/feline-panleukopenia>