



Infectious disease profiles of pathogens in a shelter environment

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Feline Leukemia (FeLV)

Disease name:	Feline Leukemia (FeLV)	
Agent:	Feline leukemia virus (enveloped RNA retrovirus)	
Susceptible domestic species	Cats	
Zoonotic?	No	
Diagnostic tests:	ELISA test antigen in blood or serum	IFA test for antigen in blood or serum
Test Sensitivity (false negatives)	Very good (much worse on saliva or tears)	Good, but not as sensitive as ELISA
Test specificity (false positives)	Good (also good on saliva and tears); however, cats may clear infection. Retesting recommended (see below).	Good
Test comments:	<p>Further testing recommendations can be found at http://www.aafponline.org/about/guidelines_retrovirus_testing_2001.PDF</p> <p>When disease is uncommon, as is often the case in healthy-appearing cats, false positives are relatively more frequent and confirmation is important.</p>	
Vaccine available?	Yes	
Vaccine efficacy:	Moderate (~ 70% efficacy)	
Excreted in:	Primarily saliva, although also found in milk, blood and urine	
Mode of transmission:	Close contact or fomites contaminated with saliva. Does not survive long in environment.	
Disinfection:	Routine disinfection is adequate.	
Incubation:	Up to four weeks from exposure to viremia detectable by antigen test; development of clinical signs may not occur for months after infection (average survival 2 years).	
Post recovery shedding?	No, but see comment below	
Carrier state?	Cats may be viremic and appear healthy for extended periods, but are infectious to other cats	