

# **FELINE INFECTIOUS PERITONITIS**

**Feline Infectious Peritonitis**, often abbreviated **FIP**, is a disease in the cat which often affects the lining of the chest and/or abdomen. There is still a lot not known about this disease. It has been recognized since the 1960's and is much more complex than many of the other cat diseases. It is currently thought that FIP is the second biggest killer of cats, second only to Feline Leukemia.

**The disease is definitely contagious from cat to cat, but we do not know exactly how it is spread.** The virus may be shed in the saliva, urine, and feces of infected cats. Most infections are thought to occur through the mouth or nose. **It is often seen later in other cats in a household once a positive case has been diagnosed.**

Signs of FIP often develop very slowly over a period of months. Early signs are very vague and mimic other diseases. Loss of appetite, high fever, and labored breathing are often the first signs. As the disease progresses, signs include very difficult breathing, distended abdomen, weight loss, and emaciation. Death will eventually occur from suffocation caused by a buildup of fluid in the chest restricting the ability of the lungs to inflate with air.

**There are NO known cures for FIP at this time. It is FATAL!** Sometimes treatment is available that can provide temporary relief in some cats, however it does not reverse the course of the disease , and in the end treatment is not successful.

The following recommendations will help control the disease:

1. Isolate infected cats to prevent the spread if they are not euthanized.
2. Practice good hygiene and sanitation with adequate cleaning of food and water bowls.
3. If you have a "positive" cat, do NOT bring a new cat into the household as long as that cat is present. Thirty days after that cat is no longer present, other cats in the household should be tested for the disease before you adopt any new cat possibly exposing them to the disease.
4. Disinfecting with 4 ounces of Clorox in one gallon of water is effective in killing the virus.
5. **VACCINATE** -- A vaccine is now available. The vaccine is given intranasally, through the nose. It is not painful. Research shows the vaccine to be effective when given to healthy cats before exposure to the disease has occurred.