



Overview of some common diagnostic tests performed in the shelter environment

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Feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV)

Disease name:	Feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV), Feline AIDS	
Agent:	Feline Immunodeficiency virus (enveloped RNA retrovirus)	
Susceptible domestic species:	Cats	
Zoonotic?	NO	
Diagnostic tests:	ELISA serum test for antibody	Western blot serum test for antibody
Test sensitivity (false negatives)	Good (must be performed 60 days after last known exposure to allow time for seroconversion)	Moderate
Test specificity (false positives):	Good, but false positive common in low prevalence populations – if possible, positive test should be confirmed by another test. False positives due to maternal antibodies in kittens < 6 months old or prior vaccination	Good. Thought to be more specific than ELISA, but recent study by Julie Levy suggests ELISA is more specific.
Test comments:	There is no currently available test which distinguishes natural infection from vaccination for FIV. More information on retrovirus testing can be found at The American Association of Feline Practitioners Guidelines site: Click on 2001 Report of feline retrovirus testing and management to download the PDF	
Vaccine available:	Yes	
Vaccine efficacy:	~ 80% in manufacturer study; may be less effective in field conditions. More information on vaccine is available at http://www.aafponline.org/fiv_info_brief.htm	
Excreted in:	Primarily saliva, genital fluids	
Mode of transmission:	Not highly contagious. Transmitted primarily through biting and mating.	
Disinfection:	Routine disinfection adequate.	
Incubation:	Antiviral antibodies first detected 2-4 weeks post infection; clinical signs usually develop within 3-6 years post-infection.	
Post-recovery shedding:	N/A	
Carrier state?:	Cats may be viremic and appear healthy for extended periods, but are infectious to other cats	