

# Understand the risk factors for **FIV** infection

## Does your cat go outside?

Any outdoor access puts your cat at risk of infection. Even if your cat only toilets outside, it is still at risk from being bitten by an infected cat.

## Has your cat ever been in a fight with another cat?

Cats like to have their own territory so it's common for them to squabble over boundaries, particularly male cats. If an FIV infected cat bites your cat, then the virus can be transmitted via the saliva. Please let your vet know if your cat has been in fights before.

## Are there any stray cats in your area?

Stray cats tend to visit many houses at night looking for food or mates, so they are more prone to territorial disputes and fighting. This puts them at high risk for FIV infection and in turn, stray cats then create a high infection risk for pet cats in their area. If you have noticed stray cats near your home, discuss this risk factor with your vet.

## Has your cat ever had an abscess?

An abscess is an infection under the skin. They are often associated with bite wound infections from fights with other cats, so this is a notable risk factor. If your cat has previously had a cat fight abscess, this risk factor should be discussed with your vet.

If you would like to discuss your cat's risk of **FIV** infection, and how **FIV** can be **prevented**, please speak to your veterinarian.



References: 1. Westman, M.E., et al (2016). Seroprevalence of feline immunodeficiency virus and feline leukaemia virus in Australia: risk factors for infection and geographical influences (2011-2013). *J Feline Med Surg Open Rep*, 2(1), 2055116916646388.  
2. Johnston, L., et al (2017). Demographics, lifestyle and veterinary care of cats in Australia and New Zealand. *J Feline Med Surg*, 1-7.

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Is your cat  
**at risk** of  
**FIV** FELINE IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS  
infection?



**Know the Facts.  
Understand the Risks.**

# Know the facts Understand the risks

## FELINE IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS



### What is feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV)?

FIV is a virus which can cause a serious and potentially fatal disease in cats by depressing the immune system. As the disease progresses, the cat may become susceptible to infections by bacteria, other viruses and parasites.

Signs which may develop include **chronic gingivitis** (inflammation of the gums), **skin disease** and **weight loss**. FIV infection has also been linked to kidney disease and neurological disease.

In some cats infected with FIV, the immune system becomes too weak to fight off other infections and disease, resulting in death. FIV has also been shown to increase the risk of some cancers.

There is **no cure** for FIV.

### How is FIV transmitted?

The most common way for a cat to become infected is by being bitten by an infected cat. It is also possible for an infected female cat to pass on the infection to her kittens during pregnancy, although this is uncommon.

### Is my cat at risk?

Cats are territorial and it is common for them to squabble over boundaries. For that reason, all cats which have outdoor access are at risk of infection, even if they only toilet outside. If there are stray and feral cats in your area this increases the risk of FIV infection.

### How can I protect my cat from FIV?

FIV can be prevented by stopping healthy cats from coming in contact with an FIV infected cat. The only foolproof way to do this is to keep them exclusively indoors or in a cat enclosure. Where this is not possible or practical, an FIV vaccine is available for cats at risk of infection i.e. for cats with any outdoor access or cats living with an FIV infected cat.

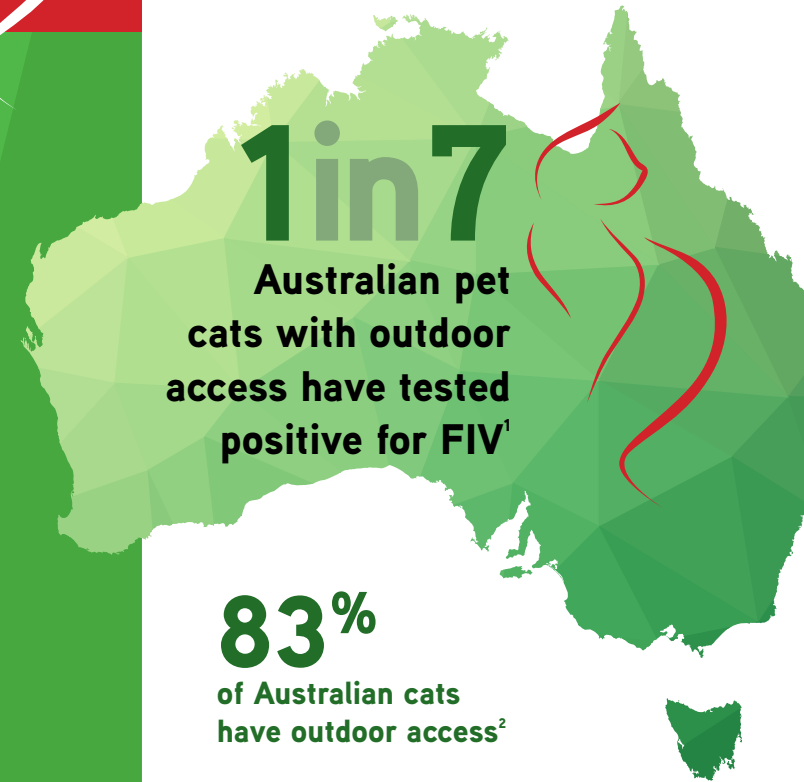
### FIV vaccination

The FIV vaccination course involves three initial doses and then annual booster vaccinations which can be administered during your cat's annual health check. It is important that the annual boosters are given on time to maintain optimal immunity.

Your veterinarian can advise you on the best vaccination protocol to protect your cat against FIV and the other important cat diseases.

Although FIV is related to human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), it does not cause disease in humans.

Did you know that  
Australia has one of  
the highest rates of FIV  
infection in the world?



### How common is FIV?

Australia has one of the highest rates of FIV infection in the world. In a study of Australian pet cats with outdoor access, 15% (more than one in seven) tested positive for FIV<sup>1</sup>.

Another study revealed that 83% of Australian cats have outdoor access e.g. toilet outdoors<sup>2</sup>.