

## Common Diseases in Cats Mouths Could Indicate Worse Problems

### **Study finds that cats with oral diseases are more likely to have feline leukemia or FIV.**

Cats with common forms of dental disease have a higher rate of testing positive for more serious diseases, according to a recent study conducted by veterinary clinics and underwritten by Idexx Laboratories.

Initial findings in a study of 1,167 cats indicated that 13.4 percent of cats that had some type of oral disease also tested positive for feline immunodeficiency virus, feline leukemia virus or both diseases. This shows that cats with oral diseases are four times more likely to have FIV and FeLV.

Sometimes referred to as the feline versions of HIV and AIDS, both diseases affect millions of cats by limiting their immune systems, but can be treated.

This study encourages testing cats that have gingivitis, stomatitis and other oral diseases for FIV and FeLV infection, said veterinarian Jan Bellows. FIV- and FeLV-infected cats often present very vague, subtle signs of illness, but once a cat has been identified with one of these diseases, the veterinarian and the pet owner can work together to ensure proper care for the cat.

The potential correlation in cats between oral disease and immune systems that are suppressed by FIV or FeLV gives veterinarians valuable new information in their efforts to fight these contagious viruses, he said.

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