

Feline Practitioners Release Feline Retrovirus Management Guidelines

Target audience includes cat owners, breeders, shelters and veterinarians.

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New guidelines aim to reduce the spread of feline leukemia and feline immunodeficiency virus in cats. The American Association of Feline Practitioners has released guidelines for diagnosing, treating and preventing feline leukemia virus (FeLV) and feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV). They are aimed for cat owners, breeders, shelters and veterinary practices.

The 2008 American Association of Feline Practitioners' Feline Retrovirus Management Guidelines call for the universal testing of all cats when they are first acquired, following exposure to an infected cat or a cat of unknown infection status, before vaccination against FeLV or FIV, before entering group housing and when cats become sick.

"Scientists have given us an entire menu of new tests to choose from and novel vaccines have been coming to the market," said Julie Levy, DVM, Ph.D., Dipl. ACVIM, University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine, who chaired the committee. "We are even starting to see medications that are specifically licensed for treatment of infected cats. Still, the best tool we have to fight these infections is to prevent exposure to them in the first place."

The guidelines also state that a decision for euthanasia never should be based solely on whether or not the cat is infected, and that cats infected with FeLV or FIV may live for many years.

The guidelines, published in the June issue of the Journal of Feline Medicine and Surgery, were made possible through an educational grant by Idexx Laboratories.