

# FELINE INFECTIOUS PERITONITIS (FIP)

## About FIP

Feline Infectious Peritonitis (FIP) is an infectious disease caused by a common cat virus (corona virus) that is transmitted through ingestion or inhalation of saliva and other body fluids of an infected cat. There are **two forms**- a **wet form** that causes fluid accumulation in the abdomen (belly) and / or chest (around the heart and lungs), and the **dry form** that causes multiple organ failure due to wide spread inflammation throughout the whole body. Young cats (up to 1.5 years of age) and cats older than 8 years are more prone to developing the infection. There is no cure, and most kittens and cats will die with the disease. There is a vaccine available, however, the effectiveness is questionable.

## Symptoms: dry form of FIP

- Stunted growth / weight loss
- Intermittent fever of unknown origin
- Granulomas (solid clumps of inflammatory white blood cells) in peritoneal cavity (belly)
- Enlarged lymph nodes (lymphadenopathy)
- Uveitis (inflammation in the eye)

## Symptoms: wet form of FIP

- Peritonitis (distended fluid filled abdomen or belly, painful belly)
- Pleuritis (inflammation of lining of lungs) causing heavy, labored breathing.
- Ataxia (uncoordinated movement, falling over, looks drunk)

## Diagnosis- FIP can be difficult to confirm 100 %.

- **Physical examination**- the veterinarian will look for evidence of abdominal fluid (fluid in the belly), will palpate (feel) for enlarged lymph nodes in the mesentery (located next to the intestines in the in the belly), inflammatory lesions in the eye (uveitis), and ataxia (wobbly, uncoordinated movement- think drunken) due to the virus getting into the spinal cord and brain (central nervous system or CNS).
- **Blood work**- CBC- (complete blood cell count) will show increased numbers of white blood cells (for fighting infection), anemia (decreased red blood cells) due to a chronic disease, and increased immunoglobulins or antibodies that the cat is making to fight off the virus.
- **Serology**- Testing blood samples for antibodies against FIP is very unreliable unless titers are very high
- **Testing of abdominal fluid** for cats with the wet form- fluid can be analyzed for protein level, the presence of antibodies (the cat's way of fighting the virus) and / or antigen ( actual parts of the virus that the cats immune system recognizes as foreign and is thus fighting.

**Treatment- NONE except for supportive care which only prolongs death.**

**Prognosis- GRAVE- nearly 100 % fatality within 6 months of infection.**