

# FIV+ CATS

## What is FIV?

FIV, or Feline Immunodeficiency Virus, is a disease of cats that is quite similar to human HIV/AIDS. Like a person with HIV, a cat can be infected with FIV and enjoy good quality of life for quite some time before developing full blown disease. There is no cure for FIV, but FIV positive cats can live a normal life.

## Who gets FIV?

There is no evidence that this disease is transmissible to any other species besides felines. FIV infected cats do not pose a risk for infection in humans.

## How is FIV spread?

Like HIV virus, FIV is not easily spread. The main route of transmission is through bites. Since the disease is mostly spread by bite wounds, you can safely keep an FIV-positive cat with FIV-negative cats if the cats get along well together. Careful monitoring of the cats' behavior and minimizing the likelihood of fights is recommended. Bites are relatively likely to occur when a cat is newly introduced into a group. Introduction of an FIV positive cat to a household with FIV negative cats (or vice versa) therefore poses a moderate risk of disease transmission. Heritage Humane Society staff are available to provide helpful advice on introducing an FIV positive cat into your household.

## What to expect after you fall in love with an FIV positive cat.

Although there is no specific treatment for FIV, infected cats can live long and healthy lives. Cats with this disease can be vulnerable to infections due to a suppressed immune system, so owners will need to seek regular preventative vet care, protect the cat from stress and infectious disease, and feed the cat a good diet to help keep the cat healthy. FIV positive cats must be housed exclusively indoors to avoid contact with cats that may fight with them and to avoid diseases they might catch.

## Why do you adopt out for FIV+ cats?

Each cat FIV positive cat at HHS is currently healthy (without secondary infection). Many animal shelters, even no-kill animal shelters, will euthanize FIV positive cats.

**But each of these cats you see proved so extraordinary, so loving and so wanting to be part of a family that the Heritage Humane Society felt euthanasia was out of the question. So although these cats have a life-long disease, they just might be the most incredible cats around.**

The front desk staff can provide more information on FIV or about each individual cat.



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