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Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV) Infection

Feline Immunodeficiency Virus is an **incurable** viral disease that can attack any system in the cats' body, causing a chronic wasting disease or an acute life-threatening episode. The disease usually affects the immune system of the cat's body and then secondarily will affect other body systems. The virus can cause a wide variety of signs:

- Respiratory Disease:
 - Chronic nasal discharge
 - Chronic ocular discharge (eyes)
 - Trouble breathing
 - Increased respiratory rate
 - Open mouth breathing
 - Collapse

- Gastro-intestinal Disease:
 - Severe gingivitis
 - Ulcers in the mouth and tongue
 - Chronic vomiting
 - Chronic diarrhoea
 - Weight loss
 - Non-responsive to medication

- Neurologic Disease:
 - Seizure
 - Aggression
 - Fever of unknown origin

Cause of the Disease: Feline Immunodeficiency Virus is a Retro virus that is related to the human AIDS virus. It is infectious to cats only. *The disease is spread by catfight and bites primarily.* Outside cats and multiple cats' houses have increased precedence of disease. The disease is more common in male cats.

Diagnosis: Feline Immunodeficiency Virus can affect many body systems and many diseases (e.g. Pneumonia, Feline infectious peritonitis, Feline Distemper, Feline Leukaemia Virus...) can initially produce similar signs as the Feline Immunodeficiency Virus. Your veterinarian may suggest some of the following diagnostics tests:

- **Complete Blood Count:** This allows your veterinarian to detect severe low red blood cell counts (anaemia), high white blood cell counts suggestive of infection or low platelet counts suggesting that your pet may have a bleeding problem.

- **Chemistry:** Allows detection of other problems within the liver and kidney, analysis of blood sugar and electrolytes, may suggest other disease or organ involvement.
- **Urinalysis:** Analysis of the urine allows the veterinarian to make sure the kidneys are adequately concentrating urine. It may detect infection of the bladder or kidneys and also checks for glucose suggestive of diabetes. The urine is checked for unusual cell types that could suggest infection or cancer.
- **Infectious disease titer screens:** Your veterinarian may suggest testing for specific disease in the geographical area that could be linked to a severe upper respiratory disease.
- **X-rays:** Your veterinarian may suggest chest or abdominal x-rays be taken to rule out the possibility of abdominal or chest tumors and other disease that could be contributing to your clinical signs. The images will also allow your veterinarian to assess the liver, kidneys, intestinal system and other organs for changes that could suggest disease.

Treatment: There is no cure for Feline Immunodeficiency Virus. Treatment is focused on treating the secondary diseases caused by the Feline Immunodeficiency Virus.

Treating Secondary Disease:

- **Antibiotic / Antifungal Treatment:** To help treat secondary infection from bacterial and fungal infection.
- **Fluid Therapy:** Subcutaneous or intravenous fluids may be suggested to manage dehydration secondary to progressive disease.
- **Blood / Plasma Transfusion:** May be needed to replace blood cell losses from severe disease.
- **Immunomodulatory Drugs**
- **Interferon:** May help slow viral infection
- **Immunoregulin:** May increase immune system response
- **Pulse Antibiotics:** To prevent infections

Instructions to go home:

- **Infection Potential:** Feline Immunodeficiency Virus is infectious to other cats within the household and the neighborhood. It is strongly recommended that while treating your Feline Immunodeficiency positive cat, that he or she remain inside and away from other cats.

Please notify us immediately if:

- ***Your pet has severe vomiting, diarrhoea, or stops eating***
- ***Your pet begins having trouble breathing***
- ***Your pet has a seizure, cannot get up or is non-responsive.***
- ***If there is any other change in your pet's health status***