



Position Statement: FeLV/FIV Testing

FeLV

At One Tail at a Time, a kitten under 6 months old should only be tested if she is showing signs and symptoms of illness that may be related to a compromised immune system caused by FIV and FeLV. If kittens are not ill, we do not recommend testing.

Kittens under 6 months of age should not be tested, as they may test positive for FeLV or FIV even though they are rarely infected. The antibodies of these retroviruses can be passed from infected mothers through nursing and will pass through the kitten in time. Kittens should only be tested if they are above 6 months of age. We recommend advising adopters to have their new kitten tested at a veterinarian rather than testing in-house prior to adoption.

FIV

We are not currently testing for FIV due to higher testing costs to us, low likelihood of a positive cat (less than 3% of cats test positive) and the need for longterm confirmatory testing prior to labeling a cat as positive. Studies have shown that mutual grooming, mild aggression, shared food bowls, litter boxes etc. did not transmit FIV over many years of cumulative exposure in a mixed group of FIV-negative and FIV-positive cats kept in a stable multi-cat household.

Reference

Levy, Julie K., and P. Cynda Crawford. "Humane Strategies for Controlling Feral Cat Populations." *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association* 225.9 (2004): 1354-60. Avmajournals.avma.org (Atypon). Web. 18 Aug. 2014.