

## CHAIN OF EVENTS LEADING TO EUTHANASIA OF NCAS CATTERY

- The first kitten came down with Panleukopenia on the main adoption floor. The kitten was euthanized due to the severity of the illness. All other cats in that specific bank of cages were quarantined in our glass isolation room.
- A littermate of that kitten who was located in a different bank of cages on the main show floor tested positive for Panleukopenia. At this time we placed our entire Cattery under a 10 day quarantine and initiated the Panleukopenia PPE protocol for the entire cattery. ( gowns, boot covers and gloves worn throughout the cattery)
- On day seven of ten, a third cat on the main floor tested positive for Panleukopenia. At this time we consulted with several different Veterinarians regarding our options to deal with the situation. We were given options ranging from extensive isolation (we were not currently equipped to handle) euthanizing the entire cattery or euthanizing the kittens due to their weaker immune systems. We choose to euthanize the kittens under six months of age in hopes that the Adults would survive. We then began a new ten day quarantine period.
- On day five of the ten day quarantine an Adult feral cat in the TNR room tested positive for Panleukopenia. Knowing our options, we euthanized the cats in the TNR room and began a new ten day quarantine.
- After the ten day quarantine was over we aired on the side of caution and extended it an additional five days. After the five day extension expired we was cleared to reopen. We were open to the public for seven to ten days with no issue when a kitten in a different room tested positive for Panleukopenia. This room had not been contaminated prior to this kitten.
- At this time we placed all cats in this area in our glass isolation room and attempted to contain the virus.
- We began another ten day quarantine. A few days into this quarantine another adult cat on the main floor tested positive for Panleulopenia. At this time we reviewed our options given to us while consulting with multiple Veterinarians and made the very difficult decision to euthanize the Cattery in order to stop the cycle and in the long run actually save more cats and kittens.
- We began an extensive process of sanitizing our entire cattery. During this ten to fourteen day process our cattery is closed to the public.



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## Panleukopenia in Cats

BY LIANNE MCLEOD, DVM · Updated 05/14/18



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Panleukopenia is a viral disease of cats and is often called feline distemper. It is highly contagious and can be fatal, especially in young cats. It is one of the diseases for which cats are routinely vaccinated (the "P" in combination FVRCP vaccines).

### Cause

Feline panleukopenia is caused by a type of parvovirus very closely related to the parvovirus found in dogs. The virus can be spread by direct contact with infected cats but also indirectly by contact with items contaminated with the virus.

The virus is very common, survives a long time in the environment, and is resistant to many disinfectants, so virtually all cats will be exposed to this virus at some point. Thankfully, vaccination greatly reduces the risk of disease.

## Risk Factors

Young kittens are most at risk, along with unvaccinated cats and cats with weakened immune systems.



## Signs and Symptoms of Panleukopenia

Symptoms of panleukopenia can include:

- Fever
- Lethargy
- Loss of appetite
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea

The virus also causes a marked decrease in white blood cells, leaving affected cats susceptible to a secondary bacterial infection. Dehydration and secondary bacterial infections are often life-threatening.

When pregnant queens are infected in early to mid-pregnancy, stillbirth is the usual result. When infection occurs late in pregnancy, the kittens may survive but the virus may affect their brain development, causing the kittens to be born with a condition called "cerebellar hypoplasia," which has effects on the kittens' coordination.

## Diagnosis of Panleukopenia

The diagnosis of panleukopenia is often strongly suspected based on the history, symptoms, and physical exam. A blood count may reveal a decrease in all types of white blood cells; that is actually what panleukopenia means. Laboratory tests can be done to check for the presence of the virus as well.

## Treating Panleukopenia

There is no specific treatment for the virus, so treatment is aimed at managing the symptoms while cat's immune system fights the virus. Hospitalization is usually required, and fluids (e.g. by intravenous drip) are generally necessary to combat dehydration.

Antibiotics may be used to prevent or fight secondary bacterial infections, and medication to reduce vomiting may also be used. In severe cases, blood transfusions may be necessary.

The infection usually takes 5 to 7 days to run its course; kittens under 5 months are usually the most severely affected, and even with intensive treatment, the outcome can be fatal.

## Preventing Panleukopenia

Vaccinations provide good protection against panleukopenia and are part of the core vaccines routinely given to cats. Your vet will recommend a series of vaccines (usually starting at 6 to 8 weeks of age), and it is important to follow this schedule as the vaccinations are not fully protective until the full series is given. Different types of vaccines are available, and your vet can help you choose the one right for your cat.

Keeping kittens and cats indoors and away from other unvaccinated cats is the best way to prevent exposure to the virus.

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Since the virus survives for so long in the environment, if you have had a cat with panleukopenia, talk to your vet about precautions to take before introducing any new kittens or unvaccinated cats into your home. A dilute bleach solution will kill the virus but cannot be used on all surfaces that might harbor the virus.

Home Care for a Cat with Panleukopenia

A cat with panleukopenia should be isolated from other kittens or susceptible cats. After the symptoms clear up, infected cats can still spread the virus for several weeks. If you have a multi-cat household discuss precautions to take, including disinfection, with your vet.

*Please note: this article has been provided for informational purposes only. If your pet is showing any signs of illness, please consult a veterinarian as quickly as possible.*

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