

DISEASES  
ARE AMONG  
MY WORST  
NIGHTMARES.



I don't like that old cliché "Curiosity killed the cat." But I admit that I love to explore and the world can be a dangerous place. For instance, wildlife, rodents, insects and other pets can carry diseases that might hurt me. The information below tells you about some of them. This is why my vaccinations and regular health examinations are so important.

## Feline infectious diseases.

### Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis (Feline Herpesvirus)<sup>1</sup>

- Causes nearly half of all upper respiratory disease infections in cats
- **Transmission:** Transmitted by coughing and sneezing from an infected cat, or by a handler
- **Signs:** Sneezing, runny nose, watery eyes and fever
- **Treatment:** Supportive treatment with antibiotics for secondary bacterial infections
- **Prognosis:** Good, except for young kittens and aged cats
- **Vaccination:** Recommended for all cats<sup>2</sup>

### Feline Calicivirus<sup>3</sup>

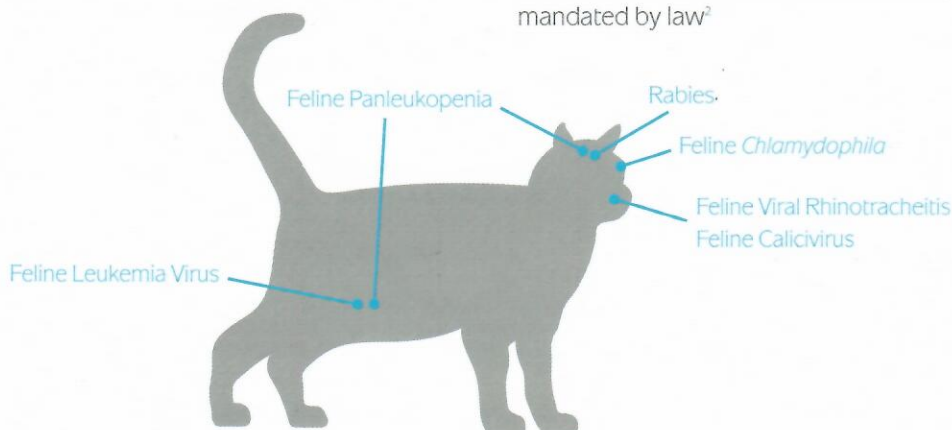
- Major cause of upper respiratory infections, often in tandem with feline viral rhinotracheitis
- **Transmission:** Transmitted by droplets coughed and sneezed from an infected cat, or by a handler
- **Signs:** Oral ulcers, limping, drooling, sneezing, fever, pneumonia
- **Treatment:** Supportive treatment with antibiotics for secondary bacterial infections
- **Prognosis:** Good, except for young kittens and aged cats
- **Vaccination:** Recommended for all cats<sup>2</sup>

### Feline Panleukopenia (Feline Parvovirus or Distemper)<sup>1</sup>

- Highly contagious virus that destroys certain cells in bone marrow, lymph tissue, intestines and brain
- **Transmission:** Transmitted by saliva, mucus and other secretions of acutely ill cats
- **Signs:** High fever, vomiting, dehydration
- **Treatment:** Aggressive fluid therapy and supportive nursing care
- **Prognosis:** Can kill kittens quite suddenly
- **Vaccination:** Recommended for all cats<sup>2</sup>

### Rabies<sup>1</sup>

- Acute viral brain disease that can infect any mammal
- Cats are the most commonly reported domestic animal with rabies
- **Transmission:** Almost always transmitted via the bite of a rabid animal (often a skunk, raccoon or bat)
- **Signs:** Sudden, significant change in behavior (irritability, aggression, fear), unexplained paralysis
- **Treatment:** None; any unvaccinated animal exposed to rabies should be euthanized or strictly isolated immediately (follow state and local laws)
- **Prognosis:** Always fatal once clinical signs appear
- **Vaccination:** Recommended for all cats, often mandated by law<sup>2</sup>



#### Feline Leukemia Virus (FeLV)<sup>1</sup>

- Causes malignant tumors and anemia
- Suppresses immune system, leaving cats vulnerable to disease
- Cats can appear healthy while infected
- **Transmission:** Virus transmitted in saliva; young kittens are especially susceptible
- **Signs:** Acute early stage is rarely detected
- **Treatment:** Almost always ineffective
- **Prognosis:** Can survive for years if no secondary diseases or lymphoma
- **Vaccination:** Recommended for all kittens and for older cats in breeding facilities, multicat households and shelters<sup>2</sup>

#### Feline *Chlamydophila* (*Chlamydia psittaci* or *Chlamydophila felis*)<sup>1</sup>

- Bacteria responsible for eye infections
- Can worsen viral respiratory diseases
- **Transmission:** Transmitted by direct contact with an infected animal
- **Signs:** Runny eyes, primarily, also sneezing and nasal discharge
- **Treatment:** Antibiotics, often applied as an eye ointment
- **Prognosis:** Good, but relapses are not uncommon
- **Vaccination:** Recommended in multicat situations with confirmed cases<sup>2</sup>

Many of the viral and bacterial diseases listed here can be avoided through a proactive, preventive health and wellness program. Ask your veterinarian about vaccination, internal parasite treatments, and flea and tick control products that will help keep your cat healthy and happy.



<sup>1</sup>Merck Veterinary Manual. Available at: <http://www.merckvetmanual.com>. Accessed August 28, 2007.

<sup>2</sup>The 2006 American Association of Feline Practitioners Feline Vaccine Advisory Panel Report, JAVMA 229(9):1405-1441.

<sup>3</sup>Greene CE, Schultz RD. Chapter 16 – Feline Respiratory Disease. In: Greene CE, ed. *Infectious Diseases of the Dog and Cat*. 3rd ed. Philadelphia: WB Saunders Co., 2006:145-154.



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