

Felines and FIV

At FOHA, we're proud of our commitment to all of the animals, regardless of need. We are fortunate to be able to help so many dogs and cats that other groups have been unable or, in some cases, unwilling to help. Our FIV+ cats are an excellent case in point. So many groups are unable to take in FIV+ cats. People don't understand what FIV is, and they think these cats are ill or sickly. People fear FIV – can people catch it? Can my dog? Will I get sick from petting an FIV+ cat? The answers are no, no and no.

Through the generosity of FOHA donors Johnnie Carey and Ruth Roberts in funding FOHA's FIV cattery, FOHA has the ability to not only help many FIV+ cats but also to educate the public about FIV. And our approach has been working! In 2005, our FIV cattery was opened, and 5 FIV+ cats found loving homes. As of May 2006, we exceeded our entire 2005 adoption numbers for FIV cats, adopting Diana, Zarita, Silver, Jackson, Buster, Rascal and Rudy – 7 fabulous felines – to fabulous new families where they are loved and cherished.

FIV Facts (courtesy of Best Friends Animal Sanctuary):

1. The Feline Immuno-deficiency Virus is a slow virus that affects a cat's immune system over a period of years.
2. FIV is a cat-only disease and cannot be spread to humans or other non-felines.
3. FIV cats most often live long, healthy, and relatively normal lives with no symptoms.
4. FIV is not easily passed between cats. It cannot be spread causally, like in litter boxes, water or food bowls, or when snuggling and playing.
5. The virus can be spread through blood transfusions, badly infected gums, or serious, penetrating bite wounds.
6. A neutered cat in a home is extremely unlikely to infect other cats, if properly introduced.
7. Many vets are not educated about FIV since the virus was only discovered 15 years ago.
8. FIV-positive cats should be kept as healthy as possible by keeping them indoors and free from stress. Feed a high-quality diet and treat any secondary medical problems as soon as they arise.