Melvina's Cat Ranch
PURR-WORTHY IDEAS

FIP Diagnosis and Care

1 What is FIP?

Feline Infectious Peritonitis (FIP) is a severe disease caused by a feline coronavirus.

Coronaviruses are a family of viruses that chiefly cause respiratory infections. Although a large number of cats may be infected with the specific feline enteric coronavirus (FeCV) that is the precursor to FIP, only 10% develop the severe form of the FIP disease (FIPV). It is unknown why only certain cats are affected, but it is thought that a mutation within the virus causes an intense inflammatory response in those individuals. FIPV is most frequently found in cats 6 months to 2 years old, but can affect a cat of any age, breed, or gender and it can be fatal. There are two forms of FIPV: a wet form (effusive) and a dry form (non-effusive). In the wet form, obvious fluid build-up is present within the abdomen and chest. The fluid has a distinct yellow tinge and has high protein and white blood cell concentration. In the dry form, inflammatory cells accumulate in various organs, such as the liver, kidneys, eyes, and brain. However, it is important to note that the effusive form can evolve into the non-effusive form, and vise-versa.

2 Transmission and Diagnosis

The initial coronavirus infection (FeCV) is generally not serious but it is highly transmissable. It is passed through the saliva and feces of infected cats primarily through ingestion of the virus. Transmission by inhalation is also possible. Because cats shed particles of the virus in feces, litter box exposure is a main source of infection. The virus can also be transmitted through saliva, by mutual grooming, sharing the same food bowl, sneezing, and through close contact. Infected queens pass along the virus to their kittens. Once the virus mutates (FIPV), it is not believed to be contagious. There is not specific test yet for FIP. Testing for coronavirus antibodies can confirm the infection, but it cannot distinguish between FeCV or FPIV. The yellow-tinged fluid that collects in the body is a hallmark sign of the wet form of FIP. A veterinarian will guide the appropriate diagnostics for each kitty's individual symptoms.

3 Signs of Illness

The initial coronavirus infection (FeCV) usually has no signs, but it may present with symptoms such as diarrhea, vomiting, or signs of upper respiratory infection, from which a cat usually recovers quickly. After mutation to FIP (FIPV), symptoms vary depending on which organs are involved. The liver, kidneys, pancreas, brain, and the eyes can be affected. The time between infection (FeCV) and mutation (FIPV) of the virus and development of signs varies between cats. Some cats eat normally; others refuse to eat. Fever, weight loss, and/or jaundice may be noted. FIPV sypmptoms may include:

- Progressive distention of the abdomen due to fluid accumulation
- Difficulty breathing
- Fever lasting 2 to 5 weeks
- Loss of appetite
- Weight loss
- Depression
- Eye and CNS issues
- HIstory of vague illness
- Issues with abdominal organs

4 FIP Treatment and Management

Until recently, FIP was considered to be a non-treatable disease. Antivirals such as nucleoside analogues and protease inhibitors show promise for safe, effective treatment; however, they are not available in all countries. A drug called GS-441524 may ultimately prove to be an effective treatment option but it is not currently approved by the FDA. Talk to your vet about treatment options and learn more from FIP Warriors https://fipwarriors.com. Current research shows the effectiveness of some of these emerging theraputics.
Read more at: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8388366/
https://blogs.cornell.edu/fightfip/fip-antivirals/

When a cat in a household develops feline infectious peritonitis, all in-contact cats will have already been exposed to the same virus. Fortunately, in most cases, in-contact cats will not develop the disease. There currently is no effective vaccine for FIP. The American Association of Feline Practitioners lists the FIP vaccine as "not recommended." Measures to reduce exposure include frequent removal of feces, early weaning, and isolation of cats that test positive for coronavirus antibodies. Proper sanitation and cleaning using antiviral disinfectants, and vaccination against other feline viruses can reduce exposure.

More at: https://ccah.vetmed.ucdavis.edu/sites/g/files/dgvnsk4586/files/inline-files/Summary%20of%20GS-441524%20treatment%20v5.pdf

SOURCES: AAFP catvets.com, National Library of Medicine, MerckVetManual.com, VetCornell.edu

© 2024