



Interpretation of Feline Coronavirus Antibody Test Results

Please note that these notes relate only to the immunofluorescence test used by the Feline Virus Unit at the University of Glasgow

FCoV serology is usually carried out for the following reasons:

- **A diagnosis of feline infectious peritonitis (FIP) is suspected**

Dry FIP. In cats with dry FIP, the anti-FCoV titre is usually 640 or higher. However, the FCoV titre alone is not sufficient to diagnose FIP. FIP diagnosis should be based on the presence of typical clinical signs and laboratory findings.

Note: Seropositive healthy cats do not have dry FIP.

Wet FIP. In cats with wet FIP, the anti-FCoV titre is usually ≥ 640 but titres can vary from 0 to ≥ 1280 . Please note however that antibody titres of 0 in wet FIP cases are extremely uncommon. A diagnosis of wet FIP should be suspected only if the cytology and biochemical analysis of the effusion is supportive; please see our website or FIP profile interpretation sheet for more details.

- **Cat has been in contact with a FIP case or a FCoV shedder**

Seropositive. A seropositive FCoV result in an in-contact cat indicates that the cat has become infected. Seroconversion usually occurs within 2 to 3 weeks of infection. Some cats will eliminate the virus, in which case the antibody titre will gradually decline, usually over a period of 3 months to several years. Therefore, it is recommended that such seropositive cats should be retested in 3 to 6 months time. Only a small proportion of seropositive cats will develop FIP (approximately 10% over their life time). Avoid stressing the cat since stress is likely to have a role in the development of FIP. It is unwise for the owner to get another cat while this cat remains seropositive since there is a chance that this cat is shedding virus.

Seronegative. Cats that remain seronegative are not infected with FCoV, do not shed virus and will not develop FIP. If the owner wishes to get another cat, then it is safe to do so.

- **Screening breeding cats**

Seropositive. Seropositive cats should be considered to be a potential source of infection for uninfected cats and queens are a potential source of infection for kittens.

Seronegative. Seronegative cats are not infected with FCoV, will not be shedding the virus and can be safely mated. It is advisable to source a seronegative mate.

- **Screening a cattery or multicat household for FCoV**

If there are many cats mixing together, then performing FCoV serology on a random sample of 3 to 4 cats will usually indicate whether FCoV is present. In catteries or households with small numbers of cats or where the cats are isolated from each other in small groups, retesting can be performed at 3 to 12 month intervals.

- **Screening a cat which is to be introduced into a FCoV-free household**

The only safe titre is zero.

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