

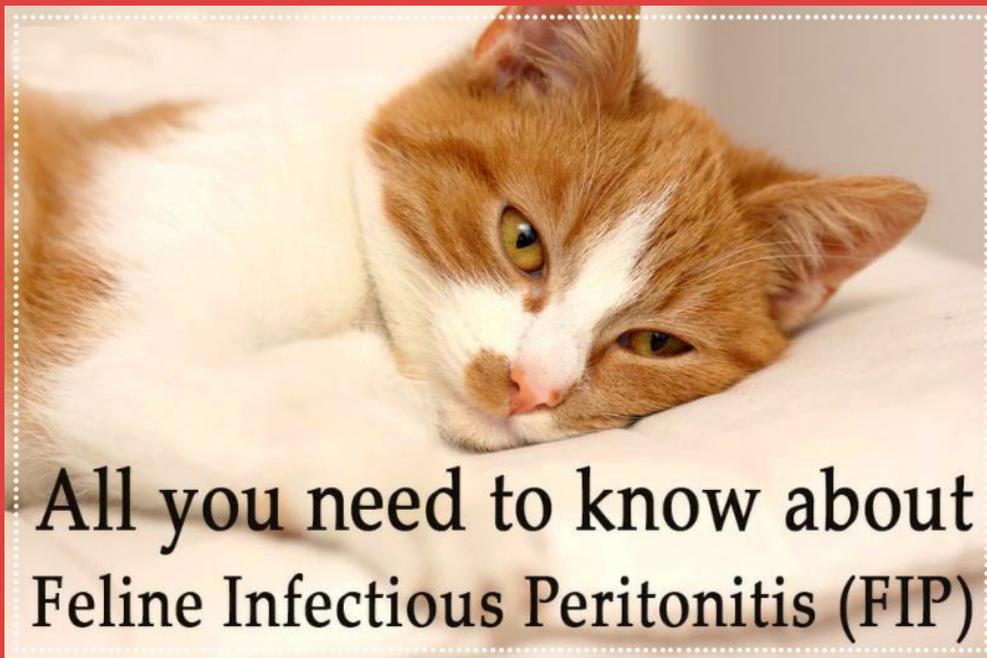
FORGOTTEN Cats



Forgotten Cats, Inc.



2018



All you need to know about Feline Infectious Peritonitis (FIP)

FIP, Feline Infectious Peritonitis, is one of the least understood of all cat diseases. FIP is most prevalent in places where large groups of cats are housed together indoors, such as at breeders or shelters. The disease is nearly always fatal, and strikes young cats usually, ages 6 months to 2 years, and those over 10 years, but thankfully is relatively rare. FIP only affects 5-10% of cats who have had the non-lethal FECV virus (coronavirus). However, it mutates in these cats to the more harmful type of virus that causes the FIP disease.

Over 70% of cases of FIP are in purebred kittens. The breeds most often stricken are Abyssinian, Bengal, Birman, Himalayan, Ragdoll, and Devon Rex.

The virus begins as feline enteric coronavirus (FECV) and is seen in young kittens at 5-7 weeks of age, as maternal immunity wanes. The majority of exposed cats will show no signs of disease or only minimal ones, including a mild upper respiratory disease with sneezing, watery eyes, a runny nose or a mild intestinal problem. However, the virus can remain dormant in the body for months to years before the cat eventually develops FIP.

An intense inflammatory reaction occurs around vessels in the tissues where these infected cells locate, often in the abdomen, kidney, or brain. It is this interaction between the body's own immune system and the virus that is responsible for the disease.

FIP generally has a gradual onset over several days or weeks, with persistent fever, decreased appetite, lethargy, weight loss, and an unkempt appearance. There are two main forms of FIP, effusive (wet) and non-effusive (dry). The effusive form (wet) is more common, 60-70% of cases, and progresses more rapidly than the non-effusive form (dry). In the effusive form fluid collects in the body cavity. The abdomen or chest fills with fluid, and breathing may be difficult if the fluids have accumulated in the chest. Withdrawing and analyzing this fluid helps veterinarians attempt to diagnose FIP, which is very difficult. Cats with the effusive form usually die before cats with the non-effusive form of the disease. Death comes as soon as one to several weeks for cats with the wet form, to a few months for cats with the dry form.

As mentioned previously, the basic non-lethal coronavirus, FCoV, is common among large groups of cats housed together. The virus is shed in feces, and cats become infected by ingesting or inhaling the virus, usually by sharing litter boxes, contaminated litter scoops and brushes. Direct, cat-to-cat virus transmission does not commonly occur. However, in an abundance of caution after the death of a cat from FIP in the household, veterinarians often recommend not getting another cat for a month. The vaccine for FIP is generally thought not to be effective.

Treatment options are few, with prednisolone being the most common treatment. PetMD reports that treatment with an experimental, antiviral protease inhibitor called GC376, injected twice daily, has resulted in survival of six test subjects, so hope for a cure may be on the horizon. For fosters and adopters of rescue cats and kittens, FIP is one of the most dreaded of diseases, and hope for a cure lies with continued research.

Fun Fact:

One cat (Morris) ran for mayor of Mexico City in 2013.



Remembering Alfie

Alfie was a sweet kitten lost far too soon. Adopted by Jeanette in early December, their bond was instantaneous and strong. Upon his arrival home, he already had Christmas presents waiting for him under the tree! Unfortunately, shortly after adopting Alfie he became very sick with what Jeanette later found out was FIP.

When she found out of the diagnosis she decided to fill his life with experiences. "I took him outside today so he could feel the warm sun on his face. I let him walk on the grass and smell a flower. I found a ladybug that he watched crawl around. On the weekend, we watched the snow fall from the comfort of his window seat. I just want him to have had a life. I feel he was robbed and in turn, so was I. He hasn't even gotten his big boy teeth yet." Alfie passed away when he was five months old. He had 81 days of unconditional love from Jeanette and her husband.



After his passing, Jeanette shared her heart wrenching thoughts with us. "I loved that kitty with all my heart and having him gone is very hard. Keith says I cry all night in my sleep and I have to admit that the day time hours are not much better. I have had cats my entire life....yet I never heard of this terrible disease.

Regrettably, I found out about it the hard way. I take from this experience that I did what I could to help him. I gave him a loving home with lots of cuddles and in turn he gave me unconditional love. What happened is so unfair. I have to believe that it was meant to be that he found his way into my heart. I have to believe that he had a good life...just too short. I have to believe that it was not my fault and that I could not have done anything to make it better. I have to believe that he was

a happy boy and that I contributed to that by giving him as many experiences as I could. I have to believe that he was meant to be mine and I was meant to be his."

We are beyond grateful that Alfie found the most loving and caring person to spend the remainder of his short life with. May his beautiful, sweet soul rest in peace. Thank you Jeanette for loving Alfie and sharing his story.

Volunteer Spotlight on Neal Ann Stephens

By Anne Meddings



This month we get to know volunteer Neal Ann Stephens, a dedicated volunteer on the front lines at the Trainer clinic.

Neal is right in the middle of all the action on clinic days (Mondays and Thursdays). After the incoming trapped cats are spayed/neutered and given medical treatment, she moves them from their traps into crates in a quarantine room. For Neal it's especially urgent to get nursing momma cats and their kittens out of traps and into clean, more spacious and comfortable crates. A cramped trap is no place to care for babies!

In quarantine, the cats will wait for 10-14 days on medical hold to ensure they are healthy enough to be moved to an adoption center or foster home. If there are especially striking cats that come in, Neal will take photographs to send to volunteer Anita Lowman for posting online to give those kitties a head start on finding a home.

Neal also helps to prepare the many, many small kittens for foster care - trimming nails, cleaning ears, deworming, administering flea treatment, and preparing any medications the foster parent will need for them.

With the high turnover of cats, it's hard, physically demanding work. The days can be very long, and it requires being on your feet the whole time. Neal often has to spend Tuesdays and Fridays recovering from Mondays and Thursdays! Thankfully as a retired person she can do just that.

Neal studied theatre in college. She worked as a production manager in New York City, then later for the University of Delaware. A highlight of her career was getting to stage manage three of South African playwright and director Athol Fugard's

works on Broadway: A Lesson from Aloes, "Master Harold"... and the Boys, and Blood Knot. Neal notes that many of the skills she used during her career were transferable to her role at Forgotten Cats - organizing, scheduling, planning, communicating, keeping within a budget, and generally "herding cats"!

Neal says she's learned a lot from volunteering with us, and not just about cats, but also about people. She is touched every day by the volunteers from all walks of life who come together to improve the lives of cats and kittens. People who work two or three jobs, but still come in to take care of the cats; people who are dealing with their own health issues yet take care of the health of our cats. She's so pleased to have met some wonderful people she might not have if not for the shared commitment to Forgotten Cats.

So how did Neal get involved with Forgotten Cats? She adopted a cat from us back in 2009, which got her onto our mailing list. After seeing an email appeal for fosters, she began fostering. Later, she took on a feed and clean volunteer shift at Trainer which eventually grew into her current role. Neal still fosters for us, and at this time has two rooms and a powder room devoted to foster kittens!

Neal lives in Delaware County with her two (former) Forgotten Cats, Madeline and Tasha, and her fosters. She currently spends over 30 hours a week volunteering for Forgotten Cats. Neal would love to have the time and freedom to travel again like she used to, but right now her cat duties are keeping her close to home. Some day she hopes to be able to be able to do some traveling again. In the meantime, Forgotten Cats is very blessed to have Neal on board, making a real difference in the lives of needy cats. Thank you for all you do Neal!

STATUS UPDATE:

In June, we sterilized 1170 cats and placed 172 cats into loving forever homes.

Visit our website at
www.forgottencats.org

Lets Keep in Touch!

**302-429-0124 (DE)
215-219-8148 (PA)**

**4023 Kennett Pike, Suite 422
Greenville, DE 19807**

Donate Today!

STAY CONNECTED

