

Panleukopenia

1. PURPOSE

This document defines the policy and procedure for properly handling neonatals with panleukopenia.

2. SCOPE AND BACKGROUND

This policy applies to all Nursery staff and volunteers.

Panleukopenia, sometimes called feline distemper, is a viral infection that most commonly affects kittens and young cats. It is transmitted via direct contact with saliva, vomit and feces, and it is easier to transmit than one may think. Panleukopenia can also be transmitted by an infected mother cat to her kittens at birth. Left untreated, it is almost always fatal. This illness can be frustrating to deal with because the virus can survive in the environment for up to 6 months. This means that other unvaccinated cats can become infected with panleukopenia simply by coming into contact with places where an infected cat has been.

Testing

Testing for panleukopenia is not routinely done at intake since the test will not show positive until the virus is shedding. The test also does not have a high accuracy rate, and if the mother cat has been vaccinated, then the kittens will test positive. Vaccinated cats and kittens will sometimes have a false positive from the Parvo test. Symptoms of panleuk are vomiting, diarrhea, loss of appetite and lethargy. Symptoms can take 3-5 days to present once a kitten has been infected. Once kittens are suspected or confirmed of having panleuk, they are put into quarantine for treatment.

Quarantine

Due to the ease of transmission and the high number of potential fatalities from this disease, the Neonatal Program has an isolation area where panleuk kittens can be quarantined until they have completed treatment and can be confirmed as post-panleuk. Once they have been approved to co-mingle with healthy cats and kittens, they can go to foster or to the cattery for adoption. Once a cat has survived panleuk, it will be immune for the rest of its life and will never be contagious again. The panleuk ward is physically separated from the nursery and has its own team of feeders who work solely in the panleuk ward; these feeders are not allowed to feed in the nursery, and nursery feeders are not allowed to go into the panleuk ward at any time, for any reason.

3. PROCEDURE

Decontamination

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

If a nursery kitten is diagnosed with panleuk, or even possible panleuk, the entire area must be decontaminated.

1. Hard scrub all surfaces with cleanser and water. In the nursery, 409 Cleanser is the only approved cleanser to be used.
2. Soak all surfaces with diluted bleach for 10 minutes.
3. Wipe clean all surfaces with the cleanser for a second time.

Use bleach diluted with water at a ration of 1:30, one part bleach to 32 part water to clean all crates, supplies, and everything that was touched by or near infected kittens.

Solution created any stronger than the above is not more effective and can lead to skin and respiratory problems for both kittens and humans. Alternately, weaker dilution is also not effective.

4. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For questions regarding this policy, contact document owner.