

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

Management of Suspected Panleukopenia Cats and Kittens

Effective Date: September 13, 2017

Developed By: Operations/Animal Health

Version: 1.0

Policy:

Panleukopenia (Feline Parvovirus) is a major disease threat in BC SPCA shelters and foster homes. Suspected cases may present with sudden death, vomiting, diarrhea, lethargy, inappetance, weight loss, dehydration or a combination of the above. The testing and handling of deceased cats is addressed elsewhere. This protocol addresses the management of living cats and kittens with possible or suspect panleukopenia. This protocol may be shared with community veterinarians.

Notes:

Please contact the Animal Health Team at ah@sPCA.bc.ca with any questions about this protocol.

Procedure:

1. All suspect cases must be **reported immediately to Animal Health**.
2. **E-mail (flagged as urgent) is the preferred method of reporting** with phone/text contact as a secondary method or if a rapid response is not received.
3. Affected animals should be **promptly isolated** if in shelter, and if in a foster home should be restricted to a cleanable area with no indirect or direct contact with other animals.
 - a. **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)** must be used in isolation areas. This includes: booties, gown, gloves, and cap.
 - b. If the foster has other cats, they should be advised to check their vaccine status and vaccinate if overdue. PPE can be given to fosters.
 - c. If they do not have other cats, separate clothing and shoes should still be worn in the foster room and proper handwashing should occur after every contact and litterbox cleaning.
4. Sick animals should be **brought to a veterinarian** on the day symptoms begin.
 - a. The veterinarian must be notified in advance of the possibility of panleukopenia so they can take measures to protect their facility and other patients.
 - b. If possible, a recent (<24 hrs) stool sample from the affected animal should be brought to the appointment.
5. Diagnostic Testing
 - a. Request that the veterinarian run an **Idexx SNAP Parvo Test**
 - i. Test swab
 1. ****first swab the tonsils****
 2. Then obtain **rectal/fecal sample on same swab**
 - ii. This is a canine test that is commonly used in shelter medicine for feline panleukopenia on both alive and deceased animals. False positives are very uncommon but false negatives occur regularly.

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- b. ***If the SNAP Parvo Test is positive, the animal should be euthanized*** (see Adoptability Guidelines)
 - c. If the SNAP Parvo Test is negative, ***request a CBC (Complete Blood Count)***
 - d. Cats/kittens with panleukopenia often, but not always, have ***very low white blood cell counts*** and/or depressed red cell count
 - i. If the CBC is normal it does not rule out panleukopenia
6. The veterinarian will also do a physical examination and if testing is negative, will recommend additional tests and/or treatment
 - a. If the vet believes there may be another cause of illness, proceed with individual decision-making according to branch resources
7. If there is a very high suspicion for panleukopenia despite negative testing, euthanasia should be strongly considered
8. **Apparently healthy littermates of cats/kittens with panleukopenia should NOT be automatically tested or euthanized**
 - a. These animals should be ***quarantined and monitored closely for 14 days from the last known exposure***
 - i. They should remain in the same foster home, or be isolated in a quarantine room in the shelter to avoid exposing other animals
 - b. If they display clinical signs, they should be brought to a veterinarian for assessment
 - c. If the vet believes panleukopenia is likely, they should be euthanized without further testing
 - d. If the vet believes there may be another cause of illness, proceed with individual decision-making according to branch resources
 - e. Consult with Animal Health for instructions about adoption planning near the end of the 14-day quarantine (may not be able to come back to shelter due to possible shedding risk)
9. In the event that a large number of cats/kittens are exposed in a branch, foster home, or satellite adoption facility, a ***full population risk assessment must be performed*** by Animal Health
 - a. Exposed animals should not be automatically tested or euthanized
 - b. The branch will be asked to fill in a spreadsheet to identify at-risk cats and determine quarantine plans (protocol addressed elsewhere)
10. Sanitation: standard ***Accelerated Hydrogen Peroxide (AHP)*** at 1:40 dilution with a 5-minute contact time will kill the virus
 - a. Note that other household disinfectants, as well as other hospital/shelter disinfectants with the exception of Virkon, do not reliably kill this type of virus

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11. Prevention:

- a. **Vaccinate** all cats/kittens over 6 weeks at intake
- b. Follow all sanitation and biosecurity procedures including wearing gloves for kitten intake exams and disinfecting intake rooms and supplies after each litter
- c. Do not allow foster kittens to roam freely in foster homes or contact resident animals, particularly during the first 14 days in care
- d. Do not mix litters of kittens in shelter or foster homes
- e. Do not mix kittens with adult cats in shelter or foster homes
- f. Stay within Capacity for Care