

# Understanding FeLV



## What is FeLV?

FeLV is short for Feline Leukemia Virus, a retrovirus that can suppress cats' immune systems and leave them susceptible to other diseases, including cancer, anemia and infection<sup>1</sup>. These cats are sometimes affectionately called *felvies*.

## What is the expected quality of life for a *felvie*?

*Felvies* can live normal, happy lives. Though, for some their lifespan will be shortened by the virus<sup>2</sup>. In many shelters and veterinary hospitals, *felvies* are euthanized upon diagnosis because they are deemed unadoptable or thought to have a poor quality of life. Tabby's Place and our thriving, playful *felvies* know this isn't true. Just like our other residents, these spirited cats have a lot of joy to give, and they deserve loving homes.

## Is FeLV Contagious?

FeLV is only contagious to other cats. The virus can be transmitted through close contact, such as mutual grooming or sharing bowls. Transmission occurs almost exclusively in cats under one year of age while older cats appear to be less susceptible to the virus. *Felvies* can live safely with people, other *felvies* and other species.

## Are the *felvies* available for adoption?

Yes. The *felvies* available for adoption are in good health otherwise and have received all the same medical care as our other adoptable cats.

## How can I provide the best care for a *felvie* cat?

As with any cat, regular veterinary checkups and quality daily care, including a healthy diet, exercise and enrichment, are important. Since *felvies* can be more susceptible to illness and can spread the disease to other cats, it's important that they live indoors and are protected from exposure to stress and disease.

## How can I get more info about adopting a *felvie*?

You can learn more by contacting our Adoption Team at 908-237-5300 ext. 603 or [adoptions@tabbysplace.org](mailto:adoptions@tabbysplace.org).

<sup>1</sup><https://www.vet.cornell.edu/departments-centers-and-institutes/cornell-feline-health-center/health-information/feline-health-topics/feline-leukemia-virus>

<sup>2</sup><https://www.austinpetsalive.org/resources/faqs/site-faqs?section=feline-leukemia-adoption-center>



**Tabby's Place**<sup>®</sup>  
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