

**Beckoning Cat Project
Low Cost Spay/Neuter & Wellness Clinic**

**1417 East Third Street
Williamsport, PA 17701
570-505-1473**

Beckoning Cat Mews Fall/winter-2016

10,000 Cats have now been spayed or neutered!!!!!!!!!!!!

We are so excited to announce that we hit the 10,000 spay/neuter mark in October 2016. What a phenomenal achievement by our super hero vet, Dr. Welch, and her trusty sidekicks, Megan, Alicia and Amber. Next time you see them, please give them a big thank you. When our group first got together in 2012/2013 and started tossing around ideas on how to best help cats in our community, we never thought there would be this much need. We couldn't have done it without our great staff or the incredible support from the community. Thank you!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Store Next Door will be open Saturdays from 9-3 starting November 26th for your holiday shopping. Our Small Business Saturday event, Christmas and Cats on November 26th will include store discounts on some items and we will have some of the artists available to take your special orders.

The most exciting part of it is that we will have adoptable cats/kittens from a local rescue on display. Please stop by and remember a portion of every purchase is donated to our low cost spay/neuter clinic. Plus, you are supporting our local artists.

WISH LIST

pee pads	paper towels	toilet paper	copy paper
towels	flat sheets	dry cat food	cat litter
stamps	canned cat food (pate)	dryer sheets	bleach
file folders	laundry detergent	Cat ear thermometer	

We have a wish list on Amazon and if you shop through Amazon Smile Program, Beckoning Cat Project will get a donation from Amazon.

Living With FIV (aka Sex and the Single Cat)

by Meghan Welch, DVM

Your cat has just been diagnosed with FIV (Feline Immunodeficiency Virus) and you've got a million questions. Maybe you have done yourself a "favor" and consulted Dr. Google, or perhaps your cousin's brother's auto mechanic who once knew someone who dated a vet tech is full of not-so-helpful, scary advice. Let's go ahead and dispel a few myths in the process of arming you with facts, so you can enjoy life with your FIV-positive buddy.

MYTH: My cat needs to be euthanized now because it's suffering/going to suffer.

FACT: NO. Absolutely not. There is absolutely no call to euthanize a healthy FIV-positive cat. She is not suffering. He is not dying.

MYTH: My cat is going to die young.

FACT: More often than not, cats with FIV live long, relatively healthy lives and can live to be eighteen-plus years old with proper veterinary care, an indoor life and normal attention to illnesses, vaccinations and well-cat care. FIV is an immunosuppressive disease, much like HIV in humans, so FIV cats are more susceptible to infectious disease and should be well-vaccinated (rabies vaccines should always be annual in FIV cats), seen by a full-service vet once to twice a year for a general check-up and dental care, and ideally given indoor homes. That being said, FIV is not uncommon in barn cats and strays and many still have immune systems competent enough to survive for a normal lifespan. It's often preventable secondary diseases/infections (dental disease that affects the kidneys and liver, respiratory disease, urinary tract infections, etc.) that are most likely to affect health and longevity. FIV cats *do* have a higher incidence of heart disease (many FIV cats have heart murmurs) and lymphosarcoma (a type of cancer), which can result in a shortened lifespan in some cases, and they *are* more susceptible to feline leukemia virus and FIP virus infection.

MYTH: My cat will be sickly its entire life.

FACT: When properly vaccinated and cared for, an FIV-positive cat can be as healthy as any other cat. Spay and neuter as early as possible. Pay special attention to keeping teeth clean, treating any infections as soon as they come up, keeping up-to-date on all recommended vaccinations and maintaining a healthy weight. See your vet at least annually. You know—all the things you'd do for any cat. Unless and until an FIV cat becomes ill, they are as healthy as the next guy. Many die of old age!

MYTH: FIV is the same as FeLV (feline leukemia virus).

FACT: No, it isn't; they are two different viruses. Though both are immune-suppressive retroviruses, FeLV has more effect on a cat's lifespan and is considerably more contagious to other cats than FIV, thus requiring more precautions for both the positive cat and cats who interact with it.

MYTH: I (my child, my dog/rabbit/ferret) can catch this disease.

FACT: FIV is a feline-specific virus. It cannot infect any other species, including humans, regardless of your level of exposure (kissing the cat, sleeping with the cat, hugging and playing with the cat, sharing food or water, bites or scratches, etc.)

MYTH: FIV is highly contagious and the cat must live separate from other cats forever.

FACT: There are only two ways to catch the FIV virus: deep bites (with blood exchange) and sex. Fighting is far and away the most common method of transmission—it's for this reason that FIV is most commonly diagnosed in unneutered, outdoor, adult tomcats, followed by females who have had multiple litters (thanks to regular contact with these roamin' Romeos). Other than these two methods, there is no other way for a cat to infect another cat—not by sharing bowls or sleeping together, grooming one another or any other facet of daily life. Multiple studies have been done that prove this: the most notable is a long-term study involving ninety-nine healthy cats and one FIV cat living together in close quarters for ten years. In ten years, not one other cat became infected with FIV. Rest easy, my friend, and don't let anyone tell you differently. ***And how do you prevent the spread of this disease, even in outdoor colonies? Spay and neuter the cats.*** No more fighting, no more sneaking off for a little love in the back forty, no more spreading FIV. Done.

MYTH: I can't test my kitten for FIV until it's six months old.

FACT: This is only half a myth. The FIV test looks for anti-FIV antibodies in the blood, rather than the presence of the actual virus. This can be tricky in kittens under six months of age who may still have circulating antibodies from their mother's milk in their bloodstream. A negative FIV antibody test is considered reliable at any age. If a kitten tests positive for FIV under six months old, the test should be repeated after age six months to determine if it is a true positive. *A note on FIV-positive kittens:* kittens are rarely true positives for FIV. Kittens can be born with the virus but it's not uncommon to have an FIV-positive mother with negative kittens. Thanks to a process called "vertical transmission" it's also possible to have positive kittens born to a negative mother and positive father, which is why testing the mother is not an accurate way to determine if the kittens are negative. *The moral of this story is:* test your kittens. If they're positive and under six months, test them again when they're older. If they're over six months and positive, they're considered infected, but should be checked with a follow-up test called a Western Blot.

MYTH: There is an effective vaccine for FIV.

FACT: There IS a vaccine for FIV, but it's controversial and not recommended, since it renders the cat positive on FIV antibody testing by most methods for the rest of its life. The obvious downside of this is that a shelter or animal control facility, not having a way to determine whether the cat is vaccinated versus true positive, might end up electing to euthanize a cat who does not, in fact, have the virus. (We have already established that euthanasia isn't a viable option, but sadly, that's still a practice in some facilities.) Add to that the idea of giving a vaccine to prevent a virus that may or may not actually affect the cat's lifespan, and there are more kinks to work out of this one than in your average Slinky. The American Association of Feline Practitioners does not currently recommend the use of the vaccine. Skip this one!

MYTH: FIV cats have a tendency to be plump, huggable and friendly.

FACT: Well, okay, for whatever reason, this one is actually true. ☺

FUN CAT FACTS:

- Calicos, Tortoiseshells and Torbies are almost always females
- A cat's nose pad is unique to each cat just like fingerprints in humans
- Red cats are not always males and they are all tabbies (have striping)
- A group of cats is called a clowder
- Cats are lactose intolerant. You should never give them milk (unless you enjoy unrelenting diarrhea in your cat)

Other Low Cost Programs

- 1. Lycoming County SPCA-Low income spay/neuter voucher for household incomes less than \$35,000.00. There are different co-payments based on the exact income. This is for cats and dogs. Please check their website for more information or contact the SPCA. [570-322-4646] [www.lycomingspca.org]**
- 2. Clinton County TNR Program- Assistance may be available for feral and barn cats to be spayed/neutered. Call Clinton County SPCA at 570-748-4756 and ask for Scott for more information. Funding is limited and you must live in Clinton County.**
- 3. SUN Pets- 866-472-7387 Services for Snyder, Union and Northumberland Counties. They have a low income program for households with income less than \$35,000.00 a year. This is for dogs and cats. You must contact SUN Pets or go online for an application and more information. www.sunpets.org**

