



Austin Pets Alive! has recently changed its protocol regarding FIV testing. The following information addresses the rationale behind this decision.

Historically, all cats and kittens in our care were tested for FIV/FeLV using an in-house ELISA test. However, research has shown that less than 2.5% of the North American feline population test positive for either FeLV or FIV. Considering the low prevalence of these diseases, we considered whether routine testing for all cats was the best use of our resources. Every month, thousands of dollars are spent on testing, and this does not account for the time and staffing it takes to perform these tests. In addition, the results of these tests are often misunderstood.

Further, the litany of research available on FIV conclusively shows the virus causes little to no impact on a cat's health, lifespan, or ability to live with a viral negative cat when neutered and in the absence of severe fighting.

As such, Austin Pets Alive! has stopped testing all cats and kittens for FIV so that our limited resources can be spent in more meaningful ways in the fight to save the most at-risk pets who would otherwise face needless shelter euthanasia. We continue to test all cats and kittens for FeLV. Cats and kittens in our care will be tested for FIV only if the test, used as a diagnostic tool, will enable us to provide better medical care in warranted medical situations.

We encourage our partners in private practice to offer FIV testing to recent adopters if warranted and as part of important routine care. If you or the adopter have concerns over a test result, please know that Austin Pets Alive! will always accept our pets back without condition and we remain available for questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

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