



# PAW HEALTH NETWORK, INC.

## FELINE INFECTIOUS ANEMIA

### ABOUT THE DISEASE

*Mycoplasma haemofelis* is a bacterial parasite transmitted by flea bites that infects red blood cells and causes **feline infectious anemia (FIA)**. Healthy feline patients will acquire a disease similar to immune-mediated hemolytic anemia (IMHA). Please see the [Immune-Mediated Hemolytic Anemia](#) document for additional information.

Due to the patient's fever and low red blood cell count (anemia), they will often exhibit:

- Weakness
- Lethargy
- Unwillingness to eat (anorexia)
- Increased breathing rate and heart rate
- Yellowing of the eyes and skin (icterus, jaundice)
- Pale gum color

### OBTAINING A DIAGNOSIS

Clinical history and physical examination are very suggestive of the infection.

In-house, a blood smear is often used to detect the bacteria on the surface of red blood cells.

Reference laboratory testing is used to confirm the infection.

### TREATMENT

Treatment is often started before reference laboratory tests have provided a positive result. Without treatment, approximately one-third of acutely ill patients die.

Antibiotics are the cornerstone of therapy, but some patients require glucocorticoids (steroids) to halt the destruction of red blood cells. In severe cases, patients may require hospitalizations, blood transfusions, and oxygen therapy.

Treated patients may persist as carriers and could experience periodic clinical relapses.

### TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Provide ectoparasite control (flea prevention) to all feline patients.