



Feline Herpesvirus-1 PCR

The feline upper respiratory tract disease complex includes those illnesses typified by rhinosinusitis, conjunctivitis, lacrimation, salivation, and oral ulcerations. **Feline herpes virus (FHV)** is widespread in the cat population. The main source of infection is virus present in ocular, nasal and oral secretions of infected cats. Latent chronic infection is the typical outcome of an acute FHV infection, and intermittent virus reactivation (following stress or corticosteroid treatment) gives rise to viral shedding, despite vaccination. Some clinically normal cats may shed virus and thus PCR results need to be interpreted with the clinical history. Therefore when FHV DNA is detected by PCR it may indicate the primary cause of disease, virus reactivation secondary to a primary disease, or virus reactivation unrelated to the cause of the current clinical disease.

The test is most reliable in cases with clinical disease. Negative test results are expected in patients with latent herpes infections as the virus is found in the trigeminal ganglion during this period. A negative test does not therefore exclude feline herpesvirus infection. Recent vaccination should have no effect on the results of the PCR test.

This test can be used in cats showing clinical signs but also in recovered cats to check for the presence of virus.



Species:
Feline



Specimen:
Conjunctival and/or oropharyngeal swab



Container:
Sterile pot or sterile tube (no media)



Collection Protocol:

- Moisten a clean, dry swab well with tears/exudate
- Firmly and vigorously swab both of the conjunctival sacs (a local anaesthetic may be used). For FeHV-1 oropharyngeal and conjunctival swabs are recommended but nasal and throat swabs are also acceptable.
- Swabs from clinical lesions in the nasal and pharyngeal areas and tissue fragments or biopsies may also be useful.
- Place the swab in a sterile container and keep at 4°C until submission.



Special handling/shipping requirements:

Dry swab samples should be sent in a chiller box with an ice block. Do not place swabs in any transport media as this may affect the sensitivity of the assay. If storing for a period before sending, samples must be stored at 4°C. All samples should be received at the laboratory within 3 days of collection as sensitivity may be impacted by prolonged storage.