



Feline Calicivirus PCR

Feline calicivirus is widespread in the feline population. The virus is shed in oral, nasal and conjunctival secretions. Cats can continue shedding the virus for more than 30 days (sometimes for years) after recovery. Viral RNA may be detected by PCR in samples from these “carrier” cats but may not be the cause of the current clinical disease. In addition error-prone replication of the viral RNA generates a high degree of variability in FCV genomes and results in the evolution of many different strains. Although it is difficult to develop a sensitive PCR assay to detect all the strain variants being generated, the current assay is able to detect the majority of those circulating in the population. The test is most reliable in cases with clinical disease. 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. A single conjunctival or oropharyngeal swab can be submitted and used to test for feline calicivirus, herpesvirus and chlamydia.



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 FCV 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.