Haemobartonellosis or Feline Infectious Anemia

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Haemobartonellosis, also known as feline infectious anemia or feline hemotropic mycoplasmosis, is a tick- and flea-transmitted disease that targets oxygen-carrying red blood cells, often dangerously decreasing their number. While Haemobartonellosis can be fatal, prevention is simple - keep your cat indoors and consistently use a monthly preventive that repels and kills ticks and fleas.

Apply a topical (on-the-skin) treatment such as Frontline® Plus for Cats. Or, outfit your cat with a Seresto Flea & Tick Collar which offers up to 8 months of continuous protection.

Haemobartonellosis is caused by the parasitic bacteria Mycoplasma haemofelis or M. haemominutum. Fleas and ticks become infected with these blood-borne bacteria by feeding on an infected animal. They then pass the bacteria on to other non-infected animals during subsequent feedings. Mycoplasmas may also be spread via blood transfusions, cat bites, or from queen to kitten. Male cats, roaming cats, and young cats appear to be at higher risk of infection.

Haemobartonellosis can range from very mild - with no symptoms or only slight anemia - to extremely severe. Typical symptoms include depression, loss of appetite, and dehydration. Severe Haemobartonellosis, with pronounced anemia, can result in weight loss, pale mucous membranes, weakness, fast heart and respiratory rates, jaundice, and even death.

With timely veterinary care and the use of antibiotics, recovery is likely. Some cats may also require large doses of prednisolone or blood transfusion(s). Despite recovery, most cats remain carriers of Mycoplasma, and in rare instances the disease can recur.

Take care to keep fleas and ticks - and the Haemobartonellosis they can transmit - away from your cat.

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