

Chlamydia felis

Chlamydia felis (formally *Chlamydophila felis* and before that *Chlamydia psittaci* var. *felis*) is a common infectious cause of conjunctivitis in cats.

When should I suspect Chlamydia infection in cats?

Cats with *Chlamydia* infection typically present with unilateral, progressing to bilateral, ocular signs (chemosis; ocular discharge: serous progressing to mucopurulent; blepharospasm). Cats rarely have other respiratory signs, although they may have transient pyrexia, inappetence, lethargy, and weight loss.

How is Chlamydia infection diagnosed?

Although inclusion bodies can sometimes be seen on cytological examination of conjunctival cells, the sensitivity is poor. PCR has superseded the use of cytology (or culture).



The Molecular Diagnostic Unit has run a quantitative PCR (qPCR) test for the detection of *Chlamydia felis* in cats for over 15 years. The sample required for the *Chlamydia felis* qPCR test is a plain or viral transport media (VTM) conjunctival swab. The *Chlamydia felis* qPCR includes an internal amplification control to ensure that a valid diagnostic result is produced for every submitted sample. The same sample can be submitted for detection of other feline ocular pathogens including *Mycoplasma felis*, Feline Herpesvirus 1, and Feline Calicivirus.

To facilitate sampling, topical proxymetacaine (local anaesthetic) can be administered. A clean swab should be gently rolled in the conjunctival sac – with the aim of collecting conjunctival cells that might contain bacteria.

Using repeat samples, the quantitative nature of this test allows us to monitor the effectiveness of treatment.

How is Chlamydia infection treated?

Systemic treatment (i.e. antimicrobials given orally) appears to be more effective than topical treatment alone. Doxycycline is administered at 10mg/kg once daily for a minimum of 4 weeks or at least two weeks following resolution of clinical signs.

Reception Hours

Mon-Fri 9am - 5pm

Contact Us

T: 0117 394 0510

E: labs@langfordvets.co.uk

catgenetics@langfordvets.co.uk

langfordvets.co.uk

Langford Vets 

 University of
BRISTOL

Chlamydia felis

Alternative agents are fluoroquinolones (e.g. pradofloxacin), while in young kittens a course of amoxicillin-clavulanate can be attempted.

Is Chlamydia infection preventable?

Cats at risk of infection can be vaccinated against *Chlamydia felis*; however, vaccination only protects against clinical signs and does not prevent infection or transmission. Cats with infection should be barrier-nursed to limit transmission to others.

More information can be found on the ABCD website: [Chlamydia felis | \(abcdcatsvets.org\)](https://www.abcdcatsvets.org/Chlamydia-felis/)

Updated January 2022 by Dr Emi Barker

Reception Hours

Mon-Fri 9am - 5pm

Contact Us

T: 0117 394 0510

E: labs@langfordvets.co.uk

catgenetics@langfordvets.co.uk

[langfordvets.co.uk](https://www.langfordvets.co.uk)

Langford Vets 

 University of
BRISTOL