

What is *Chlamydomphila felis*?

- *Chlamydomphila felis* (Cf) is a gram-negative bacterium.
- Its primary target is the conjunctiva, and infection is mostly associated with conjunctivitis.
- The infection is probably more prevalent in pedigree cats.
- The bacterium does not survive outside the host. For infection, animal-to-animal contacts are required.
- There is no epidemiological evidence that Cf infection of cats poses a zoonotic risk.

Infection

- Transmission requires close contact between cats; ocular secretions are the most important body fluid for infection.
- Most cases occur in cats <1 year of age.
- Conjunctival shedding usually ceases at around 60 days after infection, but persistent infections may develop.

Clinical signs

- The incubation period is 2-5 days. Signs generally begin in one eye and usually progress to become bilateral.
- The discharge is initially watery, becoming mucoid or mucopurulent later.
- Chemosis is a characteristic feature of chlamydiosis. There can be intense conjunctivitis with extreme hyperaemia of the nictitating membrane, blepharospasm and ocular discomfort.
- Transient fever, inappetence and weight loss may occur shortly after infection, although most cats remain well and continue to eat.

Diagnosis

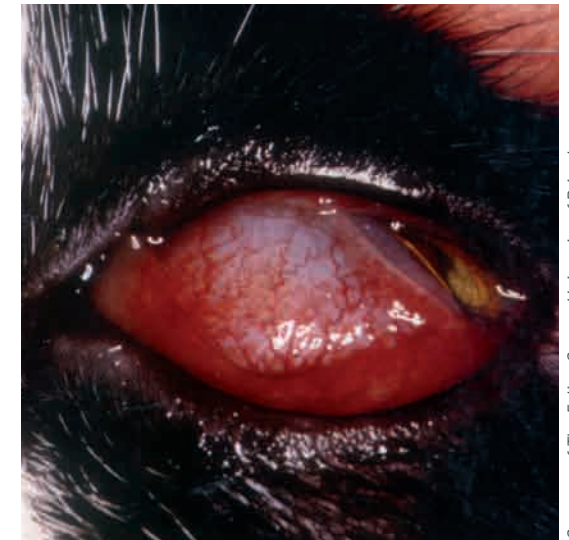
- PCR can be performed on ocular swabs. Good swabbing technique is important to obtain a sufficient number of cells.
- In unvaccinated cats, antibody detection can confirm the diagnosis.

Disease management

- Tetracyclines are the antibiotics of choice. Doxycycline has the advantage of requiring only a single daily dose (10 mg/kg orally).
- Treatment must be continued for 4 weeks to ensure elimination of the organism.
- Single housing and routine hygiene measures may help to control the spread of infection.

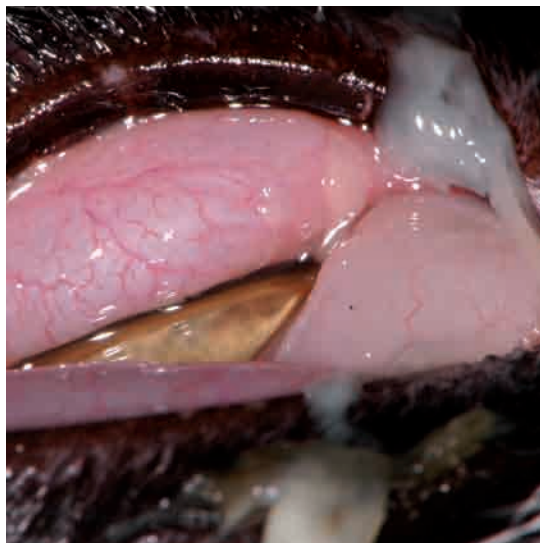
Vaccination recommendations

- Both inactivated and modified live vaccines based on whole chlamydial organisms are available as part of multivalent preparations.
- Cf is a non-core vaccine component. However, vaccination should be considered if there is a history of confirmed chlamydial disease in a shelter.
- Cats kept together for longer terms should be vaccinated regularly.
- In breeding catteries where Cf infection is endemic, the first step should be to treat all cats with doxycycline for at least 4 weeks. Once clinical signs have been controlled, the cats should be vaccinated.
- Vaccination generally begins at 8-10 weeks of age, with a second injection 3-4 weeks later.
- Annual boosters are recommended for cats that are at continued risk of exposure



Courtesy of The Feline Centre, University of Bristol

■ **Conjunctivitis in a cat with *Chlamydophila felis* infection.**



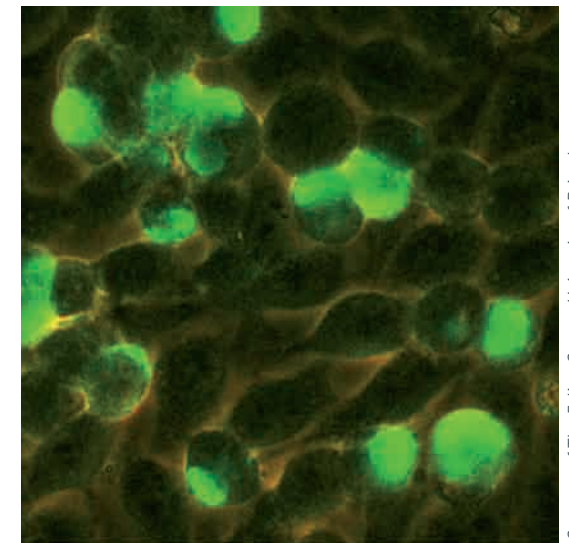
Courtesy Eric Dean

■ **Purulent conjunctivitis and chemosis associated with *Chlamydophila*.**



Courtesy of The Feline Centre, University of Bristol

■ ***Chlamydophila* infection is generally diagnosed using PCR on ocular swabs.**



Courtesy of The Feline Centre, University of Bristol

■ **Indirect immunofluorescence is used to titrate *Chlamydophila* antibodies.**