

DIAGNOSTIC ASPECTS OF LEUKOPENIA

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Leukopenia, defined arbitrarily as a total WBC count of less than 6000/cmm, is a common and often unfavorable response in a variety of feline illnesses. Red cells and platelets are frequently reduced in number also. Infections are the most frequent cause, including viral

enteritis, toxoplasmosis, overwhelming bacteremias, and chronic debilitating infections. Leukopenia also occurs with use of certain drugs—pyrimethamine, griseofulvin, and methylene blue; poisoning with lead, mercury, thallium, and arsenic; and in the early stages of lymphoma. Treatment of leukopenia is directed at the cause. Antibiotics are indicated in infections and for secondary protection. In resistant leukopenia associated with aplastic anemia, a combination of 5 mg testosterone and 5 mg prednisolone/day act together to stimulate bone marrow. In sick or healthy cats with a refractory leukopenia, 2.5 mg folic acid, p.o. every 2 days, stimulates neutrophil production.