Diagnostic Algorithm for Retrovirus Infection
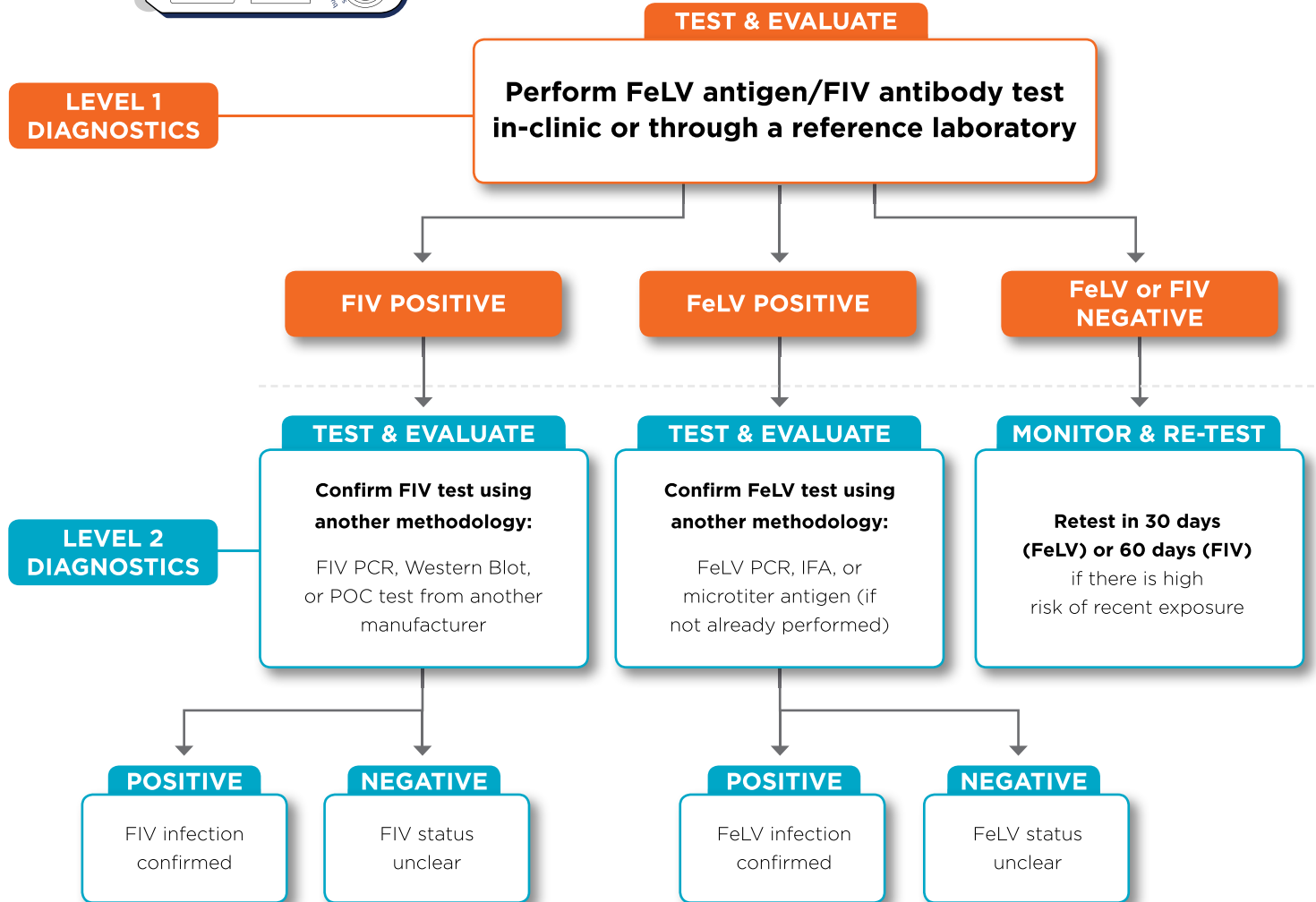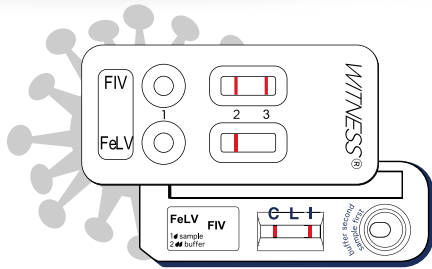
2020 AAFP Feline Retrovirus Testing and Management Guidelines

WITNESS®

LEVEL 1 DIAGNOSTICS

TEST & EVALUATE

Perform FeLV antigen/FIV antibody test in-clinic or through a reference laboratory

FIV POSITIVE

FeLV POSITIVE

FeLV or FIV NEGATIVE

LEVEL 2 DIAGNOSTICS

TEST & EVALUATE

Confirm FIV test using another methodology:

FIV PCR, Western Blot, or POC test from another manufacturer

TEST & EVALUATE

Confirm FeLV test using another methodology:

FeLV PCR, IFA, or microtiter antigen (if not already performed)

MONITOR & RE-TEST

Retest in 30 days (FeLV) or 60 days (FIV) if there is high risk of recent exposure

POSITIVE

FIV infection confirmed

NEGATIVE

FIV status unclear

POSITIVE

FeLV infection confirmed

NEGATIVE

FeLV status unclear

Level 1 diagnostics might be sufficient in circumstances where the test results are consistent with the patient's signalment and clinical signs.

Level 2 diagnostics can be appropriate to clarify infection status in some patients. This diagnostic algorithm will correctly identify the true infection status for most cats. Regressive feline leukemia virus (FeLV) infections, recent exposure, atypical responses and changes in the immune response over time complicate the interpretation and reliability of tests performed at a single point in time. The true status of cats with discordant results can be difficult to resolve.

FIV = feline immunodeficiency virus
IFA = immunofluorescent antibody
POC = point-of-care
PCR = polymerase chain reaction

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