

Routine Vaccination for Felines

Vaccines

The vaccines that we have available for cats are all considered core vaccines. This means we recommend all cats be vaccinated regularly for the following diseases: **FeLV, FVRCP, Rabies.**

Booster Vaccines: Correct booster vaccines are essential for the patient's immune system to gain lasting immunity. Ask your veterinarian for a proper booster series plan for your animal. In general, young animals must be vaccinated every 3-4 weeks until they are over 12 weeks of age to ensure maternal antibodies have not interfered with vaccine efficacy. For older animals, an initial two dose booster series, followed by annual revaccination, is sufficient.

FeLV (Feline Leukemia Virus): This virus is spread not only by bites but also by casual contact, sharing feed bowls etc. This disease causes many disease states including immune suppression, anemia, and lymphoma, and can be fatal. The vaccine we use is an intradermal vaccine meaning it is injected using a vetjet intradermal injector. An initial booster series is followed by annual vaccination. Kitten vaccines should start 9 weeks or older.

FVRCP: This combination vaccine should be given by an initial booster series followed by annual revaccination. All of the component diseases are highly contagious. This vaccine series should start for all kittens over 6 weeks old.

FVR = Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis: This feline herpes virus causes upper respiratory infections and can cause severe, chronic disease even death.

C = Calicivirus: This virus cause upper respiratory infections, ulcers and death.

P = Panleukopenia: (sometimes called, 'feline distemper'). This virus can cause diarrhea, vomiting, bone marrow suppression and death.

Rabies: This deadly virus is always fatal, and can infect all mammals. This virus is transmitted most commonly via bites. That is why it is so important that pets be vaccinated. Even indoor cats should be vaccinated for many reasons: 1) Prevent your pet from becoming infected if it escapes or a rabid bat or rodent enters the home, 2) Public health concern, 3) Quarantine rules for non-vaccinated cats that bite or scratch someone can be very costly for owners, 4) If an unvaccinated cat bites someone and that cat becomes sick, that cat may have to be euthanized for testing. Usually this vaccines is given once, a year later, then every three years.

Diagnostics

FeLV/ FIV testing: We recommend all new cats to a household be tested for FeLV and FIV, as well as all sick cats. Annual re-testing is usually recommended. These deadly viruses are important to identify because they can be carried by outwardly healthy looking cats that can be spread to other cats or can cause disease later in life for the infected cat. It is important to identify these animals so they can be cared for properly. Owners of positive animals should have a discussion with their veterinarian to discuss the risk to other cats in the household as well as what signs of disease to watch for so these cats can be treated quickly. FeLV and FIV positive cats may be more sensitive to other diseases so early diagnosis and intervention is important. There is no cure for these viruses, and animals that have these viruses are considered infected for life. These viruses are easy to test for; a small blood sample can be tested with an in-house test that takes about ten minutes.