



Vaccines and Boosters for Cats

Vaccines create immunity and are intended to reduce the severity of an illness and/or prevent a disease entirely

VACCINE SCHEDULE

Wellness Exams with Doctor:

6 to 8 weeks: Primary FVRCP (Feline Distemper)

11 to 12 weeks: Booster FVRCP, 3 Year FELV

16 to 18 weeks: Rabies

MICROCHIP AT ANY TIME

BOOSTERS

Rabies booster one year after first vaccine. After that, boosters are given every three years.

FVRCP Adult cats receive a booster one year after the initial series, then every three years.

Feline Leukemia Virus (FeLV) booster given annually

WHY DO KITTENS NEED VACCINES?

Kittens are born with antibodies and receive some antibodies from their mother while nursing. However, these maternal antibodies slowly decline over time. A vaccine ensures that kittens develop their own antibodies to replace the ones from their mother.

HOW DOES A VACCINE CREATE IMMUNITY?

When the immune system “sees” an unfamiliar microbe (bacteria or virus) as part of a vaccine, it “learns” how to produce antibodies to combat those microbes. Antibodies help the body fight infection and protect it from getting the same illness again. If the immune system “sees” or is exposed to the same microbe in the future (e.g., by natural infection), produce antibodies faster. Vaccinations are intended to reduce the severity of the illness and/or prevent the disease entirely by creating immunity.

WHY ARE BOOSTERS IMPORTANT?

In most properly vaccinated pets, the immunity provided by a vaccine should last more than a year. However, immunity declines with time. To “boost” a pet’s antibody levels, revaccinations have proven very successful.

Think of the immune system like a charging station with each vaccine being a different device that needs to be charged according to its own schedule. For some vaccines, the charge might hold for 2-3 years before boosters are needed. For others, yearly recharging is recommended.



CORE VACCINES FOR CATS

Rabies: Rabies is a viral disease that affects the central nervous system of mammals, including humans. It is almost always fatal once symptoms appear. The virus is transmitted through the saliva of infected animals, typically via bites.

FVRCP (Feline Distemper) Combination Vaccine:

- **Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis (FVR) / Feline Herpesvirus (FHV-1):** This virus causes upper respiratory infections and conjunctivitis in cats. Symptoms are sneezing, nasal discharge, eye inflammation, and discharge.
- **Feline Calicivirus (FCV):** A common viral infection in cats that affects the respiratory system, mouth, and sometimes joints. Symptoms are oral ulcers, respiratory issues, and sometimes arthritis.
- **Feline Panleukopenia (FPV):** Also known as feline distemper, this highly contagious viral disease affects the gastrointestinal tract and immune system. Symptoms are fever, vomiting, diarrhea, and severe dehydration.

ADDITIONAL VACCINES FOR CATS

While the above are the core vaccines, there are also non-core vaccines that may be recommended based on a cat’s lifestyle and risk factors.

Feline Leukemia Virus (FeLV): Recommended for cats that go outdoors or are at risk of exposure to other cats.