



Vaccinations for Cats

Our pets offer us love, affection and friendship unconditionally; they are an important part of our lives and our families. Just like any other family member their health and well-being is no doubt imperative to you. To safeguard your pet from potentially serious and sometimes fatal diseases a Vet can recommend a tailored preventative healthcare program for every pet. Your pet's tailored program includes vaccinations.

Why vaccinate your pet?

Like they say 'prevention is better than a cure', and it is no different with the diseases that can affect our dogs and cats. Most of these diseases are viral and do not respond well to medication. Where treatments are available, they can be expensive and in some circumstances even prove unsuccessful. For this and other reasons we strongly recommend vaccinations.

When should you vaccinate your pet?

Generally puppies and kittens require an initial series of three vaccines followed by an annual booster to ensure ongoing protection from disease.

Your veterinary surgeon will review your pet's medical file, and in collaboration with you the pet owner, decide exactly which vaccine program is appropriate depending on the age and health of your canine or feline friend. Unvaccinated pets are at risk of contracting serious and fatal diseases. You can protect your dog or cat from contracting these diseases by maintaining the vaccination program recommended by your vet pet care team.

Vaccinating your Cat

Disease and your cat

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VACCINATING YOUR CAT - What do you need to protect your dog from?

Feline Enteritis

Also known as Feline Panleucopenia, this viral is most dangerous affecting cats.

It is very contagious and the death rate is high, especially under 12 months of age. Pregnant cats may lose their young or give birth to kittens with abnormalities, quite often with brain damage. Symptoms are depression, loss of appetite uncontrollable vomiting and diarrhea, often with blood and severe abdominal pain.

The Virus spreads so easily that heavily contaminated areas may need cleaning with special disinfectant. Cats that do recover may continue to carry the virus for some time and infect other cats.

Feline Respiratory Disease (Cat Flu)

Otherwise known as 'Cat Flu' it is caused in 90% of cases by Feline Herpesvirus and/or Feline Calicivirus.

Feline respiratory disease affects cats of all ages, especially young kittens. It is highly contagious and causes sneezing, coughing, runny eyes, nasal discharge, loss of appetite and tongue ulcers.

Fortunately, the death rate is low except in young kittens, but the disease is distressing and may persist for several weeks. Recovered cats can continue to carry and spread the infection for long periods of time.

Chlamydia

Feline Chlamydia causes a severe persistent conjunctivitis in up to 30% of cats.

Kittens are more severely affected by Chlamydia when also infected with 'Cat Flu', and Chlamydia can be shed for many months. Vaccination against cat flu and Chlamydia helps protect against clinical disease.

Feline Leukaemia (FeLV)

Feline Leukaemia is a serious disease of cats caused by Feline Leukaemia Virus.

The Virus attacks the immune system and may be associated with lack of appetite, weight loss and apathy, pale or yellow mucous membranes, vomiting, diarrhea, reproductive problems, increased susceptibility to other infections, leukaemia and tumors. Many cats may be infected and show no signs at all.

About the third of infected cats remain chronically infected and may shed virus in their saliva, tears, nasal secretions and urine. The disease is then spread to the uninfected cats by mutual grooming, fighting, sneezing or even flea bites.

Feline AIDS

Feline AIDS is a disease caused by infection with feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV) and affects the cat's immune system. Their natural defence against attack by other diseases may be seriously affected, much in the same way as human AIDS.

This disease is not transmittable to humans.

FIV is almost always transmitted by bites from infected cats, The virus that causes the disease to present in saliva. While some infected cats show no sign of disease, others may display initial symptoms such as fever, loss of appetite, diarrhea, lethargy and swollen lymph nodes.

As the disease progresses, symptoms may occur such as weight loss, sores in and around the mouth, eye lesions, poor coat and chronic infections.

Eventually, the immune system becomes too weak to fight off other infections and diseases. As a result, the cat may die from one of these subsequent infections.

Unfortunately in Australia, a lot of cats are infected with this virus.

When does your cat need to be vaccinated?

Kittens will be "temporarily" protected against many diseases by antibodies received through their mother's milk. Unfortunately, these natural antibodies may also neutralize vaccines. A kitten will respond to a vaccination when these maternal antibodies decline sufficiently.

Under normal conditions the recommendation would be two or three vaccination visits as specified to you by your veterinary surgeon and depending on when the first vaccination is given.

Thereafter annual booster vaccinations will provide the best protection for the life of your pet.

After Vaccination Care

Your cat may be "off colour" for a day or two, some may have slight swelling and tenderness or pain around the injection site. On rare occasions reactions may be more serious.

Contact your local Vet immediately if your shows symptoms of distress.

Feline vaccination guidelines

Initial vaccination programs should provide at least two immunizations at an intervaccination interval of 3-4 weeks against Feline Enteritis, Cat Flu, Chlamydia and Leukaemia at or after 8 weeks of age.

Three vaccinations against Feline AIDS are recommended at or after 8 weeks of age.

If you have any further questions please ring or come in and see us for any help and advice.