
A Simple Guide to Feline Vaccines

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At the Animal Hospital of Lynnfield, we make specific recommendations as to what vaccines your cat will need based upon the risks of exposure to the diseases. We give vaccines to help prevent your cat from getting any one of these life threatening diseases.

Like any medication, there are some risks associated with giving vaccines. For cats, some of the risks are:

- **Fibrosarcomas or other Sarcomas**

In very **rare** circumstances a tumor can appear in the spot where the vaccine is given. Most often, this is associated with the leukemia and rabies vaccinations. Please monitor the areas where all vaccines are given and notify us if a lump should appear.

- **Allergic or Hypersensitivity Reaction**

After vaccination, some cats will run a mild fever for a day or two following vaccination and experience some soreness at the site. More serious reactions that require immediate attention by your veterinarian are severe lethargy, vomiting, diarrhea, hives or facial swelling and difficulty breathing. Your cat can also have an immune-mediated disease within a short time after vaccination. These are all serious reactions that can result in death if not properly treated. If you suspect your cat to be having a vaccine reaction, return to the clinic immediately. If it is after hours, you should call or go to Massachusetts Veterinary Referral Hospital (781)932-5802 or Essex County Veterinary Emergency Hospital (978)725-5544. Keep in mind, all these reactions are extremely **rare**, but **can** occur.

Your cat will receive vaccinations for some, if not all, of the following diseases:

Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis, Calicivirus and Panleukopenia (FVRCP) Vaccine:

Feline rhinotracheitis and calicivirus are viral infections of the respiratory system that cause fever and respiratory disease. These are both highly contagious in unvaccinated animals. Panleukopenia is a parvovirus that will cause severe vomiting, diarrhea and fever. It will suppress the immune system and as a result has a high mortality rate.

For cats that perform the vaccine series appropriately after two years, they may receive the vaccine once every three years.

Rabies Vaccine:

Rabies is a viral disease that is transferred by being bitten, transferring through the saliva. Rabies can infect all mammals, but mostly wildlife act as the source of infection. If your pet is bitten by an unfamiliar or wild animal, it should be reported to your veterinarian.

If the vaccine has not expired when given the second time, the vaccine is valid for three years. State law does require that cats be vaccinated against rabies to prevent spread to the public.

Rabies Purevax Vaccine:

Like the rabies vaccine, this is used in the prevention of rabies. However, this vaccine is a non-adjuvant vaccine which helps to reduce the risk of an adverse vaccine reaction. This vaccine is not labeled for a three year use, so boosters need to be given annually.

Feline Leukemia Vaccine:

Feline leukemia is a virus that suppresses the immune system by infecting bone marrow. As a result it can cause anemia, cancer and death. Feline leukemia is transferred at birth from the mother to the kitten, prolonged contact with bodily fluids of a leukemia patient (sharing water bowls) or thorough a bite wound. If your cat is strictly indoors and has no contact with outdoor cats, your cat is at low risk for being exposed to feline leukemia.