

FELINE VACCINATION PROTOCOL

Kittens

Remember, young kittens also have young immune systems and are susceptible to contagious diseases. Do your best to keep them away from a lot of exposure until their immune system gets older and more effective. This means limited trips to visit kitty friends. It is important to socialize your kitten but do not expose him/her to cats or places that might be highly contagious.

Kittens over 8 weeks of age are given a FVRCP vaccination (feline viral rhinotracheitis, calicivirus and panleukopenia; i.e. the 'distemper' shot). This vaccination is then repeated every 3 to 4 weeks; the last vaccination should be when the kitten is 15 to 16 weeks of age.

Kittens can be given a one year rabies* vaccination at 3 months of age, but I prefer to wait until they are at least 4 months old. The county requires that the rabies vaccination be given by four months old[†]. This first rabies vaccination is a one year vaccine.

I prefer for rabies and FVRCP vaccinations to be given separately, at least one month apart.

Unless your kitten will be at risk I do not recommend the vaccines for chlamydia (a respiratory virus), feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV), feline leukemia (Feleuk) or feline infectious peritonitis (FIP). We can discuss your kitten's risk factors and make a decision together.

Cats

One year after the kitten vaccines your cat should receive the 3 year FVRCP vaccine, then a three year rabies* vaccine one month or more after.

I then suggest the FVRCP vaccination be given at age 4 and at most every 3 years. Antibody levels (titers) can be done to determine when your cat would benefit from a booster. In totally inside cats with no exposure potential booster FVRCP vaccinations may be given more infrequently. The protection against the respiratory aspect seems to decrease in three to four years.

The rabies vaccination should be given every 3 years[‡]. For those individuals who have shown adverse reactions to vaccines a medical exemption can be issued. An antibody titer can be done to determine the level of protection against rabies but this test is not recognized by the county in lieu of vaccination.

I do suggest physical exams and fecal tests be done on a yearly basis. For outside cats, a Feleuk/FIV/heartworm test should be part of their annual assessment.

Heartworm prevention

Although it isn't widely publicized, cats need heartworm prevention, even indoor cats. There are several options available and we can discuss which one meets your needs[‡].

Remember, the best protection is a **HEALTHY IMMUNE SYSTEM**. High quality nutrition, toxin free air and water, exercise and a loving home environment are essential components of a healthy life.

*Homeopathic Lyssin 30c is given to any patient receiving a rabies vaccine to 'protect' the pet from the potential harm that homeopathic theory believes that rabies vaccine can cause. Constitutional homeopathic treatment can be started after vaccines are stopped.

[†]Remember, because rabies is a potential threat to human health, and therefore can be a legal issue, we need to follow acceptable protocol as closely as possible.

[‡]Due to their higher metabolic rate the dosage of heartworm prevention for cats is different than that of dogs so if you have both cats and dogs it's not recommended that they share heartworm prevention.