

YOUR PET AND VACCINATIONS

How do vaccinations work?

When you vaccinate your dog or cat, their immune system produces antibodies. Antibodies fight against viruses/bacteria that cause disease. Vaccines prevent disease but cannot cure it. Your vet will do a clinical exam on your pet to ensure that he/she is healthy before vaccination. A healthy immune system is needed to produce adequate antibodies to fight disease.

How often should my pet be vaccinated?

As time passes, the amount of antibodies in the body decreases. Your pet needs to keep the antibody levels high by being vaccinated annually.

Puppies and kittens have immature immune systems and are vulnerable to disease. Nursing puppies and kittens receive antibodies from their mum's milk. These antibodies can interfere with the vaccination and this is why your kitten/puppy needs multiple vaccines before moving onto the annual program.

Vaccination Schedule for Puppies and Kittens:

Age	Puppy	Kitten
6 - 8 weeks	DHPPi	Cat Core vaccine
3 months	DHPPi and Rabies	Cat Core vaccine and Rabies
4 months	DHPPi and Rabies	Rabies
Annual Boosters	DHPPi and Rabies	Cat Core vaccine and Rabies

Vaccination and immunity

Once a vaccine is given, immunity is not immediate. It takes at least **two weeks** for the immune system to respond to the antigens in the vaccine. This is achieved by producing antibodies.

In these window periods, puppies/kittens are especially vulnerable to infectious viruses/bacteria

Does vaccination guarantee that my animals will not get sick?

No

- 1) Vaccination protects against the common strains of disease. There are strains in the environment which your pet can get that are not in the vaccine.
- 2) Your pet is susceptible if he/she is immune compromised from malnutrition, parasites or stress.
- 3) Your pet is vulnerable when he/she is vaccinated when incubating a disease.

Adverse Effects:

- 1) Hypersensitivity (the face will swell)
- 2) Anaphylaxis
- 3) Fever, lethargic, poor appetite
- 4) Eye discharge

If any of the above occur, contact your vet immediately.

Diseases against which your pets are vaccinated:

Dogs:

DHPPi	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Distemper virus (affects the nose, eyes and nervous system)  Hepatitis virus (affects the liver in puppies)  Para-influenza virus (lung disease)  Parvo virus (causes severe gastro-enteritis and is highly fatal)
Kennel Cough Vaccine	<p><i>Bordetella bronchiseptica</i> (causes kennel cough in dogs). Dogs are given their first vaccination as a puppy and are boosted one month later. Your dog must then be vaccinated yearly. It is important for dogs who: walk in parks, go to kennels, go to dog parlours etc.</p>

Dogs and Cats

Rabies	Rabies is a deadly virus affecting the nervous system. It is law to have your pet vaccinated at least every 3 years.
---------------	--

Cats

Cat Core Vaccine	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  <i>Chlamydomphila felis</i> (bacteria affecting the lungs and upper respiratory tract)  Feline Calici virus (causes snuffles and bad mouth ulcers)  Feline herpes virus (causes snuffles)  Feline panleukopaenia Virus (causes immune suppression)
Feline Leukaemia Virus	Causes cancer in cats. Vaccinate as a kitten; repeat a month later and then yearly. This vaccine may cause cancer where it is injected. Speak to your vet before requesting it.

Vaccination is the single most effective method of protecting against infectious diseases in healthy animals.

Remember to deworm your pets every 6 months.