



SITARA ANIMAL HOSPITAL

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Feline Vaccination

Our vaccination protocol for cats is as follows;

Kittens receive their first immunizations at 8 weeks of age followed by a booster vaccine 1 month later. They will also receive their first rabies vaccination at this time. They will need a booster rabies vaccine one year after their first one and thereafter their vaccines will need to be "boosted" every 3 years.

Different pets have different needs

Every pet's immunization needs may vary according to the many different diseases prevalent in its environment and the relevance of those diseases to its individual wellness. Your veterinarian will help you evaluate these risks and address your pet's vaccination needs.

Vaccination is cost effective

Vaccination is a valuable preventive measure against infectious disease, and can help avoid potential illness and hardship for both you and your pet. Vaccination is a relatively inexpensive and safe way of preventing diseases that jeopardize the life of your pet and may cost a significant amount to treat.

Vaccination reduces overall risk of diseases

Organisms that can cause disease are prevalent in most pet populations but fortunately regular booster vaccination protects against outbreaks of disease caused by these organisms. Your participation in the process of regular vaccination of your cat protects your pet and helps protect the greater population of felines in your community.

Pet vaccination offers the additional benefit of reducing the threat of zoonotic illnesses in humans. Rabies is the most important of these diseases.

Regular veterinary visits are essential

You can rely on your veterinarian as the best source of accurate pet health information. During your visit to your veterinarian your pet's risk of disease will be assessed and an appropriate vaccination program will be recommended. Regular vaccination visits and physical examination of your pet go hand-in-hand in assuring continued good health for your feline friend.

Vaccinations Recommended:

Immunosuppressive Diseases:

Feline Leukemia Virus (FeLV)

Attacks the immune system and leaves the cat vulnerable to a host of secondary infections. Death most often occurs within 3 years of infection. Transmission usually occurs through contact with other cats. Those cats which live in multi cat households or are allowed to roam outdoors are particularly at risk. There is no known relationship between FeLV and leukemia as it occurs in humans.

Nervous System Disease:

Rabies is a fatal viral disease of mammals including cats, dogs, livestock and humans. Infected wildlife and unvaccinated animals are the source of this virus. Rabies is a major health hazard so it is extremely important that your pet be vaccinated against it. In many cases vaccination is required by municipal law and for travel outside Canada.

Gastrointestinal Diseases:

Panleukopenia or feline distemper is a widespread disease that is often fatal. Since most cats are likely to be exposed to Panleukopenia in their lifetime, Vaccination against this illness is of key importance. Clinical signs of Panleukopenia include fever, depression, loss of appetite, vomiting and diarrhea.

Contagious Respiratory Diseases:

Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis (FVR) is the most common upper respiratory infection in cats. Clinical signs include moderate fever, appetite loss, sneezing, tearing, discharge from the eyes and nose, mouth breathing and coughing. Even if successfully treated, FVR can lead to a lifelong infection. Vaccination is extremely important.

Feline Calicivirus (FCV) is another virus that affects the feline upper respiratory system. It accounts for approximately 40% of all respiratory diseases in cats. The severity of the infection may vary, but symptoms most often include moderate fever, ulcers and blisters on the tongue. Even if successfully treated, cats infected with FCV can become chronic virus carriers with lifelong clinical signs of sneezing and runny eyes.

Disease Risk Considerations:

Age and Nutrition

Young and old animals are the most susceptible to infectious disease. Multiple booster shots are generally required to generate immunity in kittens.

Good nutrition is an important consideration in achieving and maintaining immunity through vaccination. Easy access to a consistent supply of fresh, clean drinking water is also important for your pet's good health.

Gastrointestinal Parasites

Regular fecal checks and the appropriate deworming procedure is an essential component in maintaining the health of your animal and maximizing its resistance to disease.

Stress

Boarding your pet and moving or adding a new pet to your family may increase the stress on feline family members. Whenever these changes are planned it is wise to consult your veterinarian for his/her advice on possible new or additional immunization requirements.

Wildlife & Livestock

Wildlife species may pose the risk of carrying diseases to which your cat may be vulnerable. Many of these animals, including raccoons, skunks, squirrels, rodents, bats, and feral cats are common to both urban and rural settings.

Rabies is the most important disease carried by wildlife.

Surface Water

Puddles, ponds, ditches, streams, lakes, rivers and marshes may all contain disease-causing organisms that can cause illness in your pet. The Giardia parasite is of particular concern for cats which drink from these sources of water.

Multiple Cat Households

The risk of infectious disease is thought to be significantly increased in households with more than one feline pet.

Outdoor Activity

Cats are generally regarded as highly territorial animals; therefore outdoor activity may substantially increase the risk of injury to your pet from other stray cats. It is during these encounters that outdoor cats experience exposure to serious infectious diseases such as Feline AIDS, Feline Leukemia, Panleukopenia and Rabies.

Cats are also natural hunters, increasing the chances of parasitism contracted from their prey. Additional considerations for outdoor cats include the risk of injury or death in encounters with automobiles and wild animals.

Insect Vectors

Heartworm is increasingly recognized as a threat to the health of cats as well as dogs. This parasite is carried by mosquitoes so depending on the level of risk in your geographic area,

your veterinarian may recommend testing and prevention for your cat. In addition, fleas are known to be carriers of tapeworms.

Stray Cats

Almost every community has a population of stray and/or feral cats. These represent a real hazard because of the infectious diseases that these animals may carry. If you decide to adopt a stray cat your first visit should be to your veterinarian. Diagnostic tests may be recommended to determine what diseases this animal may harbor so that you can avoid risking the health of any cats that you currently own. All stray animals should be considered potential carriers of rabies.

Neutering

Neutering will prevent unwanted litters of kittens and may help temper your cat's territorial tendencies. If done early in life neutering may also reduce your pet's desire for outdoor activity.

Vacation Travel

If you plan to take your pet on vacation with you it is wise to make an advance visit to your veterinarian. Many diseases vary in their prevalence from area to area, requiring additional immunization and preventive considerations for your pet.