

## AN OWNER'S GUIDE TO FELINE VACCINES

### **Panleukopenia (Feline Distemper)**

**What it does** Protects against this variably fatal viral illness which is spread through the feces of an infected cat. Signs include fever, diarrhea, and vomiting.

**When recommended** The first dose between 8 and 9 weeks of age; then every 3 to 4 weeks until 4 months old.

**Booster recommendations** Once yearly.

**Potential side effects** Rare, life-threatening allergic (anaphylaxis) reaction.

**Cats at risk** All cats.

### **Viral Rhinotracheitis (Herpesvirus and Calicivirus)**

**What it does** Protects against two viral diseases that are estimated to be responsible for 80 to 90 percent of infectious upper respiratory tract diseases. Though usually not dangerous they can cause fever, sneezing, runny eyes, runny nose, and in rare instances, death. Infection is through direct exposure to sick individuals or contaminated water bowls. Some infected cats will never completely rid themselves of the viruses and serve as a major source of infection to other cats. The current vaccines minimize severity of the disease but do not completely prevent disease in all cats.

**When recommended** The first dose between 8 to 9 weeks of age; then every 3 to 4 weeks until 4 months old.

**Booster recommendations** Once yearly.

**Cats at risk** All cats.

### **Feline Leukemia Virus (FeLV)**

**What it does** Protects against this viral disease which is the leading killer of cats. The virus is spread in the saliva of infected cats; bite wounds, water bowls and commonly between a mother and her kittens. Anemia, cancer, and secondary infections resulting from immune deficiency are the most common consequences of infection.

**When recommended** The first dose is given at 11 to 12 weeks of age and a second 3 to 4 weeks later.

**Booster recommendations** Once yearly.

**Potential side effects** Rare, life-threatening allergic reactions. Same as for rabies (see below).

**Cats at risk** Outdoor cats.

### **Rabies**

**What it does** Protects against this routinely fatal disease, which potentially may be transmitted to humans. Once contracted, treatment is ineffective in cats. Rabies is passed from other infected mammals through bite wounds.

**When recommended** The first dose is given at 4 months of age.

**Booster recommendations** One year after primary vaccination, then every three years.

**Potential side effects** Inflammatory reactions are commonly seen at the site of injection; usually a transient, firm, nonpainful lump. Fever, soreness at the vaccine site and rarely, a small localized area of permanent hair loss can occur. A potentially life-threatening tumor called a sarcoma may develop in 1 to 3 cats out of every 10,000 cats vaccinated, weeks to years following administration of the vaccine. Rare, life-threatening allergic reactions.

**Cats at risk** Outdoor cats.

**All Pets**   
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