

VACCINES FOR YOUR CAT

Every cat is unique and Ellington Center Animal Clinic takes your cat's lifestyle into account when we recommend vaccines. Not every pet should receive every available vaccine. Talk with our veterinarians and decide which vaccines are right for your pet. While vaccines are a very important part of good health, routine physical exams are the BEST strategy to keep your pet healthy.



☐ Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis (FVR): is an upper respiratory infection in cats caused by a herpes virus. FVR is very contagious and can cause coughing, sneezing, nasal discharge, conjunctivitis and sometimes a very high fever. Pneumonia may develop and may be fatal, especially in young kittens.

☐ Calicivirus (C): is a virus that affects the upper respiratory system, eyes, musculoskeletal system, and gastrointestinal tract. Common symptoms usually appear suddenly and develop rapidly. Symptoms include painful lameness, fever, mild loss of appetite, pneumonia, ulcerations on the tongue, palate, lips or tip of the nose and upper respiratory infection with eye and nose discharge.

☐ Panleukopenia (P): is a highly contagious, and life-threatening viral disease that affects the gastrointestinal system and bone marrow. The virus is ubiquitous and can be found in most places that are not routinely disinfected. Kittens with immature immune systems and unvaccinated cats are particularly susceptible.

Together, these 3 vaccines are given in a single injection known as the FVRCP vaccine. This is considered a core vaccine, since all cats are at risk. Vaccination begins at 6-8 weeks of age, and continues every 3-4 weeks until the kitten is 12 weeks or older. The last vaccine is considered effective for one year. After the first year, the FVRCP vaccine is boosted every three years.

☐ RABIES: Connecticut state law requires all dogs and cats to be vaccinated against rabies. Pets are exposed to rabies by a bite from an infected animal. The rabies virus attacks the brain. There is no treatment available and the disease is always fatal. Kittens receive their first vaccine at 3 calendar months of age. The first vaccine is considered effective for 1-year. After the first year, rabies vaccines are boosted every three years.

☐ Feline Leukemia Virus (FELV): This virus is transmitted through bodily secretions such as saliva, urine, feces, and blood. Many times it is transmitted between cats that spend time outdoors and get into cat fights. The virus can suppress blood cell production and thus weaken a cat's immune system. The feline leukemia vaccine is recommended for all cats that go outside. Vaccination requires an initial injection and a booster 3-4 weeks later. The booster vaccine is considered effective for one year. After the first year, a booster vaccine is administered every three years until the cat reaches 10 years of age.

It is not uncommon for pets to experience mild side effects after being vaccinated such as soreness or local swelling at the injection site, usually starting within hours of the vaccination. A mild fever or decreased activity and appetite may be observed. If these side effects last more than a day, or cause your pet significant discomfort, it is important that you contact us.

More serious, but less common side effects could occur. These allergic reactions involve facial swelling or hives that develop within hours after vaccination. Anaphylactic life-threatening emergencies are very uncommon but may occur.

Contact us immediately if your pet experiences:

- Swelling of the muzzle, neck, eyes or ears
- Itchy skin that may seem bumpy ("hives")

Seek immediate care if your pet experiences:

- Persistent vomiting or diarrhea
- Severe coughing or difficulty breathing
- Collapse

A small, firm swelling under the skin may develop at the site of a recent rabies vaccination. The mass will start to disappear within a couple of weeks. Always inform your veterinarian if your pet has had prior reactions to any vaccines or medications.

🐾 Cats are masters at hiding illness. Any change in behavior could be the first sign of sickness. A comprehensive physical examination performed yearly is the most effective means of detecting illness and disease at the earliest and most treatable stage.