

VACCINATING YOUR CAT

Why do we vaccinate?

The answer is simple - to protect against dangerous diseases.

Due to the wilder nature of cats, the many feral colonies and their constant breeding it is impossible to eradicate the common diseases they contract. However, vaccinating our domesticated pets will help to protect them, should they come into contact with these diseases.

The most common cat viruses include:

- ❖ **Feline infectious enteritis** - similar to the canine parvovirus this is a very resistant disease which is often fatal. It can be passed from pregnant queen to kitten before birth so many kittens are born with it.
- ❖ **Feline upper respiratory disease** - known as cat FLU, can be fatal though usually carried for life and symptoms shown only at times of stress or debilitation. Sneezing, nasal discharge and runny eyes are the usual symptoms. Easily spread to other cats as this is an airborne disease.
- ❖ **Feline leukaemia virus** - the disease attacks the immune system causing bone marrow suppression. Cats can live, like humans, with the disease for many years without becoming ill. They may develop their own immunity to the disease or become permanent carriers, developing symptoms at times of stress or illness.

Another disease to consider for cats is **Feline Immunodeficiency Virus** - or feline AIDS. The disease belongs to the same group as the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). Like humans, cats can live with the disease for many years and show no symptoms, however they are much more susceptible to other infections and can become very ill with stress or just a 'cold'. There is no cure for the disease; the best way to try to prevent it is to get your cat neutered as it is mostly spread through fighting of un-neutered territorial cats.

Cats start their vaccination course from 9 weeks, with a second injection given 3 weeks later. A week after their second injection they are safe to go outside, though considering the transmission of FIV it is advisable to keep young kittens in until they are neutered (usually at 6 months of age). People often believe the older the animal gets the less they need their yearly boosters. It is true that animals will build up a certain amount of

immunity over the years however, the older the animal, the less likely they will be able to shake off any illnesses, therefore continued vaccination is essential.

Pictures for cat vaccination article



Cat vaccination card



Vaccine drawn up into syringe ready to inject.



Chanel having her first vaccine at 11 weeks old.