



## **Kitten Vaccination Schedule**

Going to the vet repeatedly over several months for vaccinations, and then for boosters or titers throughout your cat's life, may seem like an inconvenience, but the diseases that vaccinations will shield our pets from are dangerous, potentially deadly, and, thankfully, largely preventable. With so many different diseases and vaccinations, it can sometimes be confusing to know which vaccinations puppies need and which ones are important but optional. Below is our recommended vaccination schedule for your kitten's first year. "Core" vaccines are recommended for all cats by the AVMA (American Veterinary Medical Association). "Noncore" vaccines are based on the needs of individual cats.

### **Core Vaccines**

#### **FVRCP Vaccine**

- This combination vaccine protects against three of the most common and contagious viral diseases in cats: Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis, Calicivirus and Panleukopenia (distemper). Rhinotracheitis, caused by the feline herpes virus, is a common virus that invades the nose lining, sinuses, throat, windpipe and eye membranes. Calicivirus is a common respiratory infection that affects the cat's throat, eyes, nasal passages, mouth, and sometimes lungs, intestines and musculoskeletal system. Panleukopenia, also called feline distemper, is a highly contagious virus affecting blood cells in the intestinal tract, bone marrow, and brain. ***Typically, vaccination starts at 8 weeks of age and continues every 3-4 weeks (with the last vaccine occurring at or after 16 weeks of age), followed by a booster a year later. Adults with previous vaccination need revaccination every 3 years.***

#### **Rabies Vaccine**

- Rabies virus can be transmitted to mammals including humans usually through saliva or bite wounds from an infected animal. The most commonly infected animals in the surrounding area are raccoons and bats. Georgia state law requires vaccination of dogs and cats since it is one of the few deadly diseases pets can transmit to humans. If an unvaccinated pet bites a person, serious consequences may occur including quarantine of your pet at your expense up to 6 months and/or euthanasia. ***Kittens will need this vaccine at 16 weeks of age, followed by a booster a year later. Adults with previous vaccination need revaccination every 1-3 years.***

## **Noncore Vaccines**

### **Leukemia Vaccine**

- Feline leukemia is a viral disease that affects the bone marrow and immune systems of cats. Kittens can be infected in utero from their mother if she has the disease, or can become infected via transmission from other cats. Outdoor cats are most at risk for this disease. *An initial vaccine and a booster 3-4 weeks apart is required for full immunity. Adults with previous vaccination need revaccination every 3 years.*

## **Kitten Combo Test**

### **Combo FELV/FIV Test**

- Feline leukemia virus (FeLV) and feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV) are retroviruses that represent two of the most important infectious diseases of cats worldwide. Because both diseases are spread through contact with saliva from infected cats, certain social behaviors such as mutual grooming and sharing food or water bowls can spread the disease. Likewise, kittens can become infected during fetal development or during the first days of life as their mothers nurse and care for them. Because of this, we recommend testing all kittens at 12 weeks old to be sure that infection was not transmitted from their mother.

## **Vaccinations After Kittenhood**

### **Annual Visits, Boosters & Titers**

- There is a difference of opinion amongst veterinarians and scientists about the recommended frequency of vaccine boosters versus “over-vaccination”. We prefer to take a conservative and balanced approach to annual wellness visits. We agree with spacing out vaccines as much as possible and instead prefer to customize each cat’s vaccination schedule according to it’s lifestyle (whether the cat goes outside, gets boarded, etc.) We also highly recommend age-appropriate diagnostics to help us detect any hidden diseases or conditions early on. The risks of cancer, diabetes, hormone disorders, kidney and liver problems all increase with age. Early detection can improve the prognosis of many diseases, keep medical costs down, and help your cat live longer.
- Many cat owners opt for titer tests before they administer annual vaccinations. Titer tests measure a cat’s immunity levels, and this can determine which, if any, vaccinations are necessary. Please note that a titer test is not an option when it comes to the rabies vaccine, which is required by law.

