



What is a vaccine?

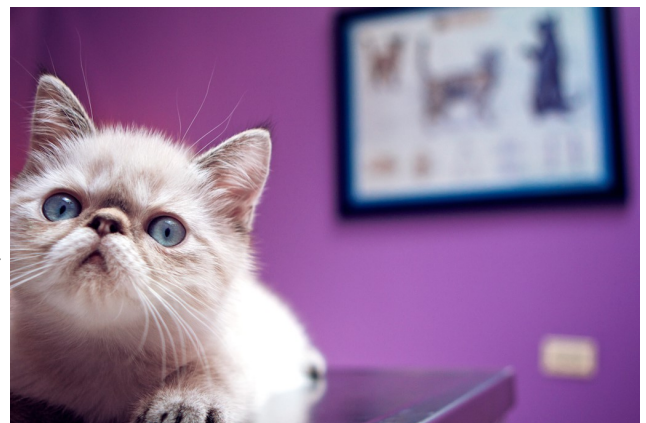
Vaccines contain viruses, bacteria or other disease-causing organisms that are killed or modified so they no longer cause disease or illness. When given, vaccines should stimulate the animal's immune system to produce disease fighting cells and proteins (known as antibodies). For most animals a vaccination is very effective in preventing the disease for several years. CORE Vaccines are vaccines against the most virulent and life-threatening diseases (illustrated in the chart below). These are vaccines that all animals must receive.



Dog Core Vaccines		Cat Core Vaccines	
<i>Disease/Vaccine</i>	<i>Affects</i>	<i>Disease/Vaccine</i>	<i>Affects</i>
Distemper	Nervous system, Respiratory system, Gastrointestinal tract	Panleukopenia (Feline Distemper)	Gastrointestinal Tract
Adenovirus (Hepatitis)	Liver	FHV (Herpes Virus)	Respiratory system
Parvovirus	Gastrointestinal Tract	FCV (Calicivirus)	Respiratory
Rabies	Neurological	Rabies	Neurological

What is Immunity?

Immunity refers to an animal's ability to fight off disease. An animal's immunity to diseases is in development from birth. Generally, there are two types of immunity, innate and acquired. Innate immunity is formed in utero, it is nonspecific and includes things like the cough reflex, the skin, enzymes in tears, etc. Acquired immunity develops after birth and can be either natural or artificial. Natural acquired immunity comes from either an infection that the body has mounted a defense to (formed antibodies) or from maternal antibodies (breast milk, skin contact, etc.). Artificial immunity is achieved from vaccinations, which stimulate the body's immune system to produce antibodies. Once antibodies are made, they come into action to fight infection whenever re-exposure occurs





Why do young animals need so many vaccinations?

A puppy or kitten receives an initial series of vaccinations timed to correspond with diminishing maternal antibodies and promote a graduated stimulation of their own immune response. Current vaccination guidelines call for the last vaccination in the puppy series to be given at fourteen to sixteen weeks of age and at sixteen weeks for a kitten. The “booster” to this initial series is given at the twelve-month mark after the last vaccine in the puppy/kitten series.



After the first-year booster when are vaccinations required?

Research has shown that vaccinations can provide effective immunity to the CORE diseases for many years. Recent Vaccination Guidelines from WSAVA (World Small Animal Veterinary Association) recommend that **most** animals require revaccination with CORE vaccines no more than every three years. However, not all animals maintain immunity at the same levels. WSAVA supports the use of antibody level testing or titers to determine the need for revaccination. Law mandates regular rabies vaccinations but certain exceptions exist, and this should be part of a discussion with your veterinarian.

