

Vaccinating Your Cat

Why Should I Vaccinate My Cat?

Vaccinations are a relatively inexpensive and simple way to prevent, or reduce the severity of, many major and sometimes life-threatening diseases in domestic animals. It is recommended that cats are vaccinated annually, usually with an F4 vaccination, and for outside cats, also an FIV vaccination. A description of the vaccination can be found below.

What Diseases Can Be Vaccinated Against?

The most basic level of protection, an F3 vaccine, protects against:

1. *Feline panleucopaenia*, a potentially a deadly enteritis causing diarrhoea;
2. *Feline viral rhinotracheitis*; and
3. *Feline calicivirus*.

Note: Conditions (2) and (3) are both highly contagious components of cat flu, and can result in severe and recurrent disease.

Our recommended vaccine, an F4 vaccine, protects against:

1. *Feline panleucopaenia*, a potentially a deadly enteritis causing diarrhoea;
2. *Feline viral rhinotracheitis*;
3. *Feline calicivirus*; and
4. *Feline chlamydiosis*.

Note: Conditions (2), (3) and (4), are highly contagious components of cat flu, and can result in severe and recurrent disease. *Feline chlamydiosis* also often causes lesions on the eyes and gums, in conjunction with sneezing and upper respiratory symptoms seen with cat flu.

Cats may also be vaccinated against the *Feline Leukaemia Virus (FeLV)* and *Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV)*. **FeLV** is a relatively rare disease in Australia, so is often not protected against. The FeLV vaccine is also thought to be associated with the development of certain tumours in cats in America. **FIV** is similar to HIV in humans and has quite a high prevalence in outside cats. It is mainly transmitted through cat fighting. If your cat goes outside please discuss the benefits of FIV vaccination with your veterinarian.

Are There Any Risks Associated with Cat Vaccinations?

Vaccination, like any medical treatment, cannot be 100% guaranteed. Side effects from vaccination are rare, however, and usually mild. It is normal for cats, and particularly kittens, to be a little bit lethargic for 24 hours, post vaccination. Side effects could include vomiting, or in rare cases, an allergic reaction. If you believe your pet may be having an adverse reaction please contact your vet.

If you have any questions or concerns about vaccinating your cat, please discuss them with your veterinarian.