



Kennesaw Mountain Veterinary Services
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Vaccine Protocols in Small Animals

Rabies

Rabies is a serious, often fatal, disease affecting a variety of animals. Dogs and cats can contract rabies if bitten by an infected animal (such as a skunk or raccoon). The progression of the disease is often rapid and deadly. Rabies can also be easily transmitted to humans.

All states require that dogs be vaccinated against rabies. Most states also require vaccinations for cats. Rabies vaccinations can only be administered by licensed veterinarians, and the doctor's FDA license must almost always be listed on the rabies vaccination certificate. Some counties and cities have local requirements that are more stringent than state requirements. Check with your animal control administration to be sure that all rabies vaccination and licensing requirements are met.

Recommended Core Vaccines for Dogs

The AVMA Council on Biologic and Therapeutic Agents' Report on Cat and Dog Vaccines has recommended that the core vaccines for dogs include distemper, canine adenovirus-2 (hepatitis and respiratory disease) and canine parvovirus-2, in addition to the required rabies vaccination. While none of these vaccinations are generally required by law, they can prevent debilitating, and sometimes fatal, illnesses in a dog. The three core vaccinations listed above are all required to board a dog at a veterinarian or kennel or to take a dog to dog day care. They are often also required to attend training classes or a public dog park.

Noncore Dog Vaccines

Other vaccines available for dogs include leptospirosis, coronavirus, canine parainfluenza and Bordetella bronchiseptica (both are causes of "kennel cough"), and Borrelia burgdorferi, which causes Lyme disease. These vaccines are considered noncore, because they either work to prevent less common diseases (Lyme disease) or prevent non-fatal diseases (kennel cough).

While not generally required by law, the kennel cough vaccine is almost always required to board a dog or attend training, dog day care or public parks. Kennel cough is highly contagious and can be spread quickly through a kennel environment, so your dog is at high risk in these situations if she has not received the vaccination.

Recommended Core Vaccines for Cats

Feline panleukopenia (distemper), feline viral rhinotracheitis and feline calicivirus are all considered core vaccines for cats. Panleukopenia is highly contagious and almost always fatal to kittens and older animals and requires aggressive supportive care for healthy adult cats to survive. The rhino and calici viruses account for more than 90 percent of respiratory infection in cats and can cause serious, chronic respiratory problems.



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Noncore Cat Vaccines

There are four main vaccines considered non-essential for cats: feline leukemia (FeLV), feline infectious peritonitis (FIP), ringworm and chlamydia. The feline leukemia vaccine is effective for prevention but can have side effects and is not recommended for indoor-only cats who do not come in contact with other cats. It is recommended for cats in shelter and cattery environments and for cats who are allowed outside. The vaccine has been linked to injection-site sarcomas.

The feline infectious peritonitis and ringworm vaccinations are not recommended. The efficacy of both vaccines is low, and both can have side effects. In some cases, veterinarians have reported that the FIP vaccine actually triggered the manifestation of the disease.

