



Vaccines



Core Vaccinations

Up until 16 weeks of age, kittens can retain antibodies (provided by their mothers) within their bloodstream that can neutralize certain types of vaccines. The main vaccine that can be neutralized is the FVRCP vaccine, which is one of the two core vaccines for which we vaccinate all cats. Therefore, the FVRCP vaccine must be given every 3-4 weeks through 16 weeks of age. The other core vaccine we give to all kittens is the rabies vaccine, which is given once, usually between 12 and 16 weeks of age. These vaccines will be boosted again 1 year later. Thereafter, the doctors of Mount Laurel Animal Hospital recommend that the FVRCP vaccine be boosted every 3 years, and the rabies vaccine be boosted yearly.

Leukemia Virus Vaccination

We also strongly recommend that all kittens be vaccinated against feline leukemia virus; the American Association of Feline Practitioners also advises this recommendation, which is made in part because kittens have been found to show the highest risk of infection from this disease. Annual boosters against this disease are then recommended for any adult cat who goes outside or has reasonable potential to get outside, or who lives with another cat that goes outside.

During your visit, we will test your kitten for two serious infections — feline leukemia virus and feline immunodeficiency virus (or feline “AIDS”). Should your cat go outside as an adult (or live with cats that go outside), we recommend yearly testing, or testing anytime after exposure with a cat of unknown status.



UNDERSTANDING VACCINES

Vaccine Side Effects

The most common side effect from vaccination is a low-grade fever, which means your cat could appear more tired or show a reduced appetite for one to two days after receiving a vaccination. Keep in mind that vaccine reactions are rare, but may occur. If a severe reaction is to occur; it generally happens within minutes to hours. You should bring your kitten back in for evaluation and/or treatment as soon as possible should it show any of the following signs: severe vomiting, diarrhea, lethargy, or has any collapse, facial swelling, or trouble breathing. Lastly, while there are actually many vaccines available for use in cats, our hospital only feels that three of these are appropriate for our patients: rabies, FVRCP, and leukemia virus.

