



# VACCINATING YOUR PET

## THE IMPORTANCE OF VACCINATING YOUR PET

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### FIVE REASONS TO VACCINATE YOUR PET:

1. Vaccinations prevent many pet illnesses.
2. Vaccinations can help avoid costly treatments for diseases that are preventable.
3. Vaccinations prevent diseases that can be passed between animals and from animals to people.
4. Diseases prevalent in wildlife, such as rabies and distemper, can infect unvaccinated pets.
5. In many areas, local or state ordinances require certain vaccinations of household pets.

### WHAT ARE CORE VACCINES?

Core vaccines are considered vital to all pets based on risk of exposure, severity of disease or transmissibility to humans.

**FOR DOGS:** Vaccines for canine parvovirus, distemper, canine hepatitis, and rabies are considered core vaccines. Canine parvovirus, distemper and canine hepatitis are typically given in a combination vaccine most commonly known as DA2PP.

**FOR CATS:** Vaccines for panleukopenia (feline distemper), feline calicivirus, feline herpesvirus type I (rhinotracheitis) and rabies are considered core vaccines. Panleukopenia (feline distemper), feline calicivirus and feline herpesvirus type I (rhinotracheitis) are typically given in a combination vaccine commonly known as FVRCP.

## WHAT IS CANINE PARVOVIRUS?

Canine parvovirus is a highly contagious virus that can affect all dogs, but unvaccinated dogs and young puppies are the most at risk. The virus is spread by direct dog-to-dog contact and contact with contaminated feces (stool), environments, or people. The virus can also contaminate kennel surfaces, food and water bowls, collars and leashes, and the hands and clothing of people who handle infected dogs. It can survive in all types of environments for long periods of time. The virus is readily transmitted from place to place on the hair or feet of dogs or via contaminated cages, shoes, or other objects.

## WHAT IS CANINE DISTEMPER?

Canine distemper is a contagious and serious disease caused by a virus that attacks the respiratory, gastrointestinal, and nervous systems of puppies and dogs. Puppies and dogs most often become infected through airborne exposure (through sneezing or coughing) to the virus from an infected dog or wild animal. The virus can also be transmitted by shared food and water bowls and equipment. Infected dogs can shed the virus for months, and mother dogs can pass the virus through the placenta to their puppies.

## WHAT IS PANLEUKOPENIA?

Feline panleukopenia (FP) is a highly contagious viral disease of cats caused by the feline parvovirus. Kittens are most severely affected by the virus. The names feline distemper and feline parvo should not be confused with canine distemper or canine parvo— although their names are similar, they are caused by different viruses. The viruses do not infect people. The feline parvovirus infects and kills cells that are rapidly growing and dividing, such as those in the bone marrow, intestines, and the developing fetus.

## WHAT IS FELINE CALCIVIRUS?

Feline calicivirus is a virus that is an important cause of upper respiratory infections and oral disease in cats. Although several different viruses and bacteria can cause respiratory disease in cats, calicivirus is one of the more common infectious agents isolated in cats with a respiratory infection.

## WHAT IS RHINOTRACHEITIS?

Herpesvirus infection, also known as feline viral rhinotracheitis (FVR), is an infectious disease caused by feline herpesvirus Type-1. As with other herpes viruses, the virus is very species specific, and is only known to cause infections in domestic and wild cats. The virus can infect cats of all ages. FVR is a major cause of **upper respiratory disease** in cats and is the most common cause of **conjunctivitis** (inflammation of the tissues surrounding the eye, especially the lining of the lids and the third eyelid).

## WHAT IS RABIES?

Rabies is a preventable viral disease most often transmitted through the bite of a rabid animal. The rabies virus infects the central nervous system of mammals, ultimately causing disease in the brain and death. Most rabies cases reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) each year occur in wild animals like bats, raccoons, skunks, and foxes, although any mammal can get rabies. **Rabies vaccinations are mandatory for all cats and dogs living within the State of Texas. A citation can be issued to you if your pet does not have a current rabies vaccination.**

## HOW OFTEN DO I NEED TO VACCINATE MY PET?

Your veterinarian can best determine a vaccination schedule for your pet. This will depend on the type of vaccine, your pet's age, medical history, environment and lifestyle.

**FOR PUPPIES AND KITTENS:** If the mother has a healthy immune system, they will most likely receive antibodies in mother's milk while nursing. They should receive a series of vaccinations starting at six to eight weeks of age. A veterinarian should administer a minimum of three vaccinations at three- to four-week intervals. The final dose should be administered at 16 weeks of age.

**FOR ADULT CATS AND DOGS:** Some adults might receive certain vaccines yearly, while other vaccines might be given every three years.

**Please remember that just because you have vaccinated your pet once, it does not mean they are protected forever. Most veterinarians will send you a reminder when your pet is due for a vaccine but, it is a good idea to set up an appointment for their next round of vaccines during a visit to your veterinarian and put mark it on your calendar.**

## HELPFUL LINKS:

*Vaccinations* | American Veterinary Medical Association

<https://www.avma.org/resources-tools/pet-owners/petcare/vaccinations>

*Vaccinations for Your Pet* | ASPCA

<https://www.asPCA.org/pet-care/general-pet-care/vaccinations-your-pet>

