

Feline Vaccinations

Core Vaccinations: Recommended for all cats

- Core vaccines are given as early as 6 weeks of age then every 3-4 weeks until 16 weeks of age, **except for rabies**
 - Maternally-derived antibodies will cause vaccine inactivation
 - Maternally-derived antibodies are generally lost by 9-12 weeks, but some are lost as early as 6 weeks
- Rabies is given as early as 8-12 weeks** (depending on type) and then every year (or 3 years depending on vaccine and state law)



Administration of a rabies vaccination to a kitten in El Salvador.
Image courtesy, Smooth O

	Antigen	Disease	Comments	Preferred type
Combination vaccine: FVRCP	FPV	Feline panleukopenia – highly contagious parvoviral infection that typically causes severe, acute gastroenteritis and leukopenia; often fatal	Contraindicated in pregnant queens or kittens less than 4 weeks	Modified-live because rapid and more effective immunity
	FHV-1	Feline herpesvirus type 1 – corneal inflammation (ulcerative or stromal), feline viral rhinotracheitis	Vaccination reduces clinical signs but may not reduce recurrences or establish latency. Does not prevent infection	Modified-live or inactivated
	FCV	Feline calicivirus – causes upper respiratory signs, oral ulceration, uncommonly causes arthritis; VS-FCV causes severe acute disease with high mortality	Various strains of virus: F9, 255, VS-FCV Vaccine effective against disease but not infection	Multivalent modified-live and inactivated
	Rabies	Fatal polioencephalitis of warm-blooded mammals (including humans); hydrophobia	Associated with injection-site sarcoma: give only in distal right pelvic limb “Rabies on the Right”	Inactivated only; do not use modified-live in cats

Pearls:

- Injection-site sarcomas**
 - Associated with rabies and FeLV vaccines
 - Give **R**abies in distal right pelvic limb and Fe**L**V in distal left pelvic limb
 - Easier to completely remove tumor if it occurs
 - DOCUMENT what was given and where
 - Usually due to inactivated vaccine adjuvant

Vaccination of cats with preexisting illness

- May be justified in patients with chronic, stable illness
- Avoid in patients with acute illness, debilitation, high fever
- FeLV + cats – only core vaccines (unless at risk for non-core diseases) even then may not be able to mount an adequate immune response
- FIV + cats – only core vaccines (unless at risk for non-core diseases). Should be able to mount immune response early in disease

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Optional Vaccinations: typically start at 8 weeks in 2 doses, 2-4 weeks apart, then annually.

Antigen	Disease	Comments	Preferred type
FeLV	Feline leukemia – characterized by immunosuppression, myelosuppression, and neoplasia; kittens more likely to be persistently viremic	Associated with injection-site sarcoma: only give in distal left pelvic limb . Recommended for non-infected at risk adult cats (outdoor and multiple cat households). Recommended for all kittens (as early as 8 weeks).	Adjuvanted inactivated or nonadjuvanted recombinant
FIV	FIV -Long subclinical (latent) stage followed by chronic immunosuppression	Controversial vaccine. Interferes with future FIV testing. Only recommended for high risk cats (outdoor cats that fight). 3 doses required	Adjuvanted inactivated – whole-virus dual subtype (clades A & D)
FCoV (FIP)	Feline coronaviruses vary in pathogenicity. Feline infectious peritonitis (FIP) is an often fatal disease of young cats in multicat households. Causes body cavity effusions and/or neurologic signs.	Very controversial; only 50-75% of cats are protected. Given at 16 weeks or older. (they can be infected before that age in an endemic environment). 3 doses required	Intranasal modified-live
<i>C felis</i>	Chlamydiosis is a bacterial infection associated with acute and chronic conjunctivitis	Does not prevent infection or clinical signs, but will reduce severity of disease. Viral shedding is not reduced. Recommended only in multi-cat environment with established infection	Modified-live or inactivated
<i>B bronchiseptica</i>	Bordetellosis is a bacterial infection that results in fever, lymphadenopathy, sneezing, oculonasal discharge	Can be given as early as 4 weeks of age. Recommended 5 days prior to boarding or to prevent infection in infected catteries.	Intranasal – modified live
<i>G lamblia</i>	Giardiasis is a protozoal disease that usually results in acute small-bowel diarrhea, but can be chronic or large-bowel diarrhea	Ineffective in fecal shedding of cysts and prevention of infection	Adjuvanted inactivated trophozoites

Typical schedules: Kittens < 16 weeks old

Kittens	FVRCP	Rabies	FeLV	Non-core (if at risk)
6 weeks	+			
9 weeks	+		+	<i>B bronchiseptica</i> , FIV, <i>C felis</i>
12 weeks	+	+	+	FIV, <i>C felis</i>
15 weeks	+			FIV, FIP
18 weeks	+			FIP
12 months	+	+	if at risk	<i>B bronchiseptica</i> , FIV, <i>C felis</i> , FIP
Annually	+	+ (depending on vaccine and state law – may be every 3 years)	if at risk	<i>B bronchiseptica</i> , FIV, <i>C felis</i> , FIP



Feline Vaccinations

Typical schedules: Adult cats and kittens > 16 weeks old

Adults and kittens > 16 weeks	FVRCP	Rabies	FelV	Non-core (if at risk)
Initial	+	+	if at risk	<i>B bronchiseptica</i> , FIV, <i>C felis</i> , FIP
3 weeks later	+			FIV, <i>C felis</i> , FIP
6 weeks later				FIV
12 months later	+	+	if at risk	<i>B bronchiseptica</i> , FIV, <i>C felis</i> , FIP
Annually	+	+ (depending on vaccine and state law – may be every 3 years)	if at risk	<i>B bronchiseptica</i> , FIV, <i>C felis</i> , FIP

Refs: Côté, Clinical Veterinary Advisor, 2nd ed, pp 382, 386, 611-612, 823, 895, 963; American Association of Feline Practitioners: 2013 Feline Vaccination Guidelines, Vaccination in General Practice; The 2013 American Association of Feline Practitioners Feline Vaccine Advisory Panel Report; Merck Manual, 10th ed (online): Feline Panleukopenia, Feline Infectious Peritonitis, Feline Leukemia Virus and Related Diseases, Feline Respiratory Disease Complex, Feline Enteric Coronavirus, Active Immunization, Rabies

My Notes: