

Why Vaccinating Your Pet is Important



Animal
Care Centers
of NYC
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Vaccinations are an important part of your dog's or cat's health care routine. By vaccinating your pet, you help protect your family friend from various diseases including rabies, distemper, parvovirus, infectious hepatitis, Bordetella, feline leukemia and others.

What Diseases Should Dogs Be Vaccinated Against?

Rabies

Once symptoms develop, rabies is always fatal. The rabies virus attacks the brain and central nervous system, and is transmitted to humans primarily through the bite or sometimes scratch of an infected animal. It is required by the law to vaccinate your dog or cat against rabies.

Canine Distemper

Canine distemper is a serious, often fatal viral infection that causes a wide variety of symptoms in infected dogs including coughing, nasal discharge, vomiting and diarrhea, and even seizures. Dogs can become infected when they come into direct contact with a sick dog or with an environment contaminated by that dog. All dogs should be vaccinated against distemper, starting with a series of vaccinations when they are a puppy (usually starting at 6 weeks of age).

Canine Infectious Hepatitis

Canine Infectious Hepatitis is a viral disease of the liver. The hepatitis virus is transmitted in urine or nasal or eye secretions of infected animals and can cause severe, permanent damage.

Canine Parvovirus

Canine Parvovirus is highly contagious and easily spread, and can cause serious or even fatal disease in unvaccinated dogs, particularly puppies. Vomiting,

bloody diarrhea, and severe dehydration are common symptoms. The virus can remain infective in the environment for years, and all dogs should be vaccinated against this disease when they are a puppy.

Canine Parainfluenza

Parainfluenza is one cause of upper respiratory infections commonly known as “kennel cough” in dogs. It is highly contagious and can be spread through the air, causing coughing and sneezing in infected dogs.

NOTE: The DA2PP vaccination, commonly referred to as the “distemper shot,” protects dogs against canine distemper, infectious hepatitis, parvovirus, and parainfluenza. It is considered a core vaccine and is recommended for all dogs.

Bordetella bronchiseptica

The bacteria *Bordetella* is another common cause of kennel cough in dogs. Like parainfluenza, it is highly contagious and can be spread through the air. *Bordetella* infections are most common in dogs that are housed with or spend a lot of time with many other dogs, and vaccination is generally recommended for dogs who will be boarded frequently, attend doggy day care, or visit dog parks on a regular basis.

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What Diseases Should Cats be Vaccinated Against?

Feline Panleukopenia

Panleukopenia, also known as feline distemper, is a common, highly contagious viral infection of cats similar to parvovirus infections in dogs. It can cause serious and often fatal disease in unvaccinated cats, particularly kittens. Vomiting, dehydration, weakness, and poor appetite are common symptoms in cats.

Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis

Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis refers to upper respiratory infections caused by a feline herpesvirus (this virus does not infect people). Symptoms commonly include sneezing and ocular and nasal discharge similar to a common cold in people. Once infected, cats usually carry the herpes virus for the rest of their lives and may become sick when stressed.

Feline Calicivirus

Feline Calicivirus is a common, highly contagious cause of upper respiratory infections in cats. Symptoms caused by this virus are very similar to those caused by the herpesvirus, and include sneezing and ocular discharge. In some cases cats may develop painful ulcers on their tongue and in the back of their throats as a result of this infection.

NOTE: The three-in-one vaccine protects your pet from Rhinotracheitis, Calicivirus and Panleukopenia.

NOTE: The FVRCP vaccination, commonly referred to as the “distemper shot,” protects cats against panleukopenia (feline distemper), and feline herpesvirus and calicivirus. It is considered a core vaccine and is recommended for all cats.

How Often Should My Pet Be Vaccinated?

- You should always discuss your pet’s health and particular medical needs with your veterinarian.
- The following general guidelines are appropriate for most animals:
 - All puppies should receive a 4-in-1 DA2PP vaccine starting at six to eight weeks of age and repeated every three to four weeks until the puppy is at least 4 months old.
 - Adult dogs not previously vaccinated as puppies should receive a 4-in-1 DA2PP vaccine twice three to four weeks apart.
 - All kittens should receive a 3-in-1 FVRCP vaccine starting at six to eight weeks of age and repeated every three to four weeks until the kitten is at least 4 months of age.
 - Adult cats not previously vaccinated as kittens should receive a 3-in-1 FVRCP vaccine twice three to four weeks apart.
 - For both cats and dogs, booster vaccines are typically given a year later and then every three years based on the recommendation of the veterinarian.
 - Cats and dogs must be vaccinated against rabies by four months of age and receive boosters on an annual or tri-annual basis in accordance with local law and the specific vaccine administered.