



## THE PURPOSE OF VACCINATION AND VACCINATION TIMING FOR FELINES

Vaccines present the immune system with a harmless portion of a virus or bacteria and allow it to make protective antibodies. These antibodies are then able to stick to the “real” virus or bacteria when it enters the body. Antibodies help prevent germs from causing tissue damage. If we don’t have enough antibodies to a certain virus or bacteria, it may set up shop in the lungs, liver or GI tract and start destroying these organs. Over time, antibody levels gradually fall below protective levels. Therefore, booster vaccines are needed periodically to prod the memory cells into action. If our pets are exposed to these germs before the antibodies have had a chance to build up, they are susceptible to sometimes fatal infectious diseases such as pneumonia, liver or kidney failure or severe vomiting and diarrhea.

Usually it takes about 7 – 10 days to produce enough antibodies for adequate protection against feline herpes virus, calicivirus, parvovirus, leukemia virus and rabies.



### Core Vaccines – what do all those abbreviations mean?

| Vaccine Name         | Virus or Bacteria                            | Mode of Transmission                        | Severity of Illness  | Frequency of Adult Vaccination               |
|----------------------|--|---|--|--|
| FVRCP<br>“Distemper” | Feline viral rhino-tracheitis (herpes virus) | Oronasal exposure to secretions             | Acute - upper respiratory infection - sneezing, runny eyes and nose, fever, inappetance, ulcers in the eyes<br>Chronic - carriers or recurrence of acute signs | Every 3 years                                |
|                      | Calicivirus                                  | Oronasal exposure to secretions             | Acute - fever, conjunctivitis, ulcers in the mouth, joint pain<br>Chronic - carriers or recurrence of acute signs  |  |
|                      | Panleukopenia (parvo virus)                  | In utero or oronasal exposure to secretions | Kittens - loss of balance or severe vomiting and diarrhea, death   |  |
| Rabies               | Rabies Virus                                 | Saliva                                      | Neurologic signs – always fatal  | Every 3 years                                |
| FelV<br>“Leukemia”   | Feline Leukemia Virus                        | Exposure to secretions                      | Immunosuppression, cancer  | Every year for cats determined to be at risk |