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VACCINES - FELINE

Vaccinations are used to protect against certain viruses and bacteria that can cause dangerous diseases. The principle of immunization in cats is the same as in humans. Small amounts of pathogens or parts of pathogens are injected into the muscles, mucous membranes, or under the skin, so that the body builds up defenses

Vaccinations are an essential part of preventative healthcare for cats. They protect against several viral and bacterial diseases that can be life-threatening or cause chronic illness. The core feline vaccines include feline viral rhinotracheitis, calicivirus, and panleukopenia. These vaccines are recommended for all cats, regardless of lifestyle or exposure risk. Additionally, non-core vaccines are available for feline leukemia virus (FeLV), feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV), and other diseases that may be recommended based on a cat's lifestyle and exposure risk.

What vaccines do we recommend?

Rabies: Rabies is a deadly viral disease that can affect both animals and humans, and it is unfortunately very prevalent in Arizona. Dogs are one of the primary carriers of rabies, but the disease can be transmitted to cats and even humans through a bite or scratch. The Rabies vaccine is the only vaccine that is **mandatory for Midtown patients**. It protects our clients, our staff, and our patients from a disease that is 100% fatal. Most felines receive their first rabies vaccine between 12 and 16 weeks, again 1 year later, and then every 3 years for the rest of their lives.

FVRCP: This vaccine delivers triple protection against three separate diseases, all of which are highly contagious. Kittens can receive this vaccine when they are 8 weeks, 12 weeks, and 16 weeks old, then again 1 year later, and every 3 years after that.

- Feline viral **Rhinotracheitis**, represented by the F, V, and R in the shot's abbreviation, is an upper respiratory disease caused by feline herpesvirus. The virus affects a cat's nose, throat, and eyes, causing congestion and often discharge.
- **Calicivirus**, accounting for the C, is an upper respiratory and oral disease that can infect the bloodstream and organs. It can cause congestion and ulcers or infections in the tongue.
- **Panleukopenia**, the P, is a virus shed in nasal secretions as well as urine and stool. It poses a severe threat for cats that come into contact with other cats. This virus is also known as feline distemper or feline parvo. It attacks fast-growing and dividing cells, such as those lining the digestive tract, causing debilitating and dehydrating diarrhea. It also destroys cells in the bone marrow, robbing the cat of the immunity granted by white blood cells.

FeLV: The feline leukemia virus (FeLV) vaccine is used to prevent infection by the FeLV virus, which is highly contagious and can cause a range of clinical signs in cats, from mild illness to cancer. FeLV is spread through bodily fluids, such as saliva, urine, and blood, and can be transmitted through grooming, sharing food and water bowls, and biting. Vaccination against FeLV is recommended for all cats, particularly those that spend time outdoors or live with other cats.

While the FeLV vaccine is highly effective, it is important to note that it does not provide complete protection against all strains of the virus. This is why it's the one vaccine, that typically *requires a test prior to administration*. Testing for FeLV and FIV (*feline immunodeficiency virus*) are necessary, as a positive patient is likely to have a compromised immune system, and should not be vaccinated.

If your cat is strictly indoors, and you have no plans to change that, your veterinarian may recommend vaccinating your cat when they are a kitten, but discontinue the adult vaccinations. This vaccine is typically given at 8 or 12 weeks, and repeated at 16 weeks of age, then annually if your cat goes outdoors.