

FELINE LEUKAEMIA VIRUS

Feline Leukaemia Virus is an important cause of illness and mortality in pet cats. Approximately one third of cats exposed to the virus will go on to develop clinical signs and the majority of these cats will die within 2 to 4 years of becoming infected.

Clinical signs are extremely diverse but include fever, lethargy, poor appetite and weight loss. Respiratory, skin and intestinal signs are also common, as the virus weakens the cat's immune system and allows other infections to take hold.

Those cats that develop disease are also prone to developing cancer, and this develops in around 15% of cats infected with Feline Leukaemia Virus.

FELINE INFECTIOUS ENTERITIS

This disease, also known as panleukopaenia, is similar to parvovirus in dogs. Infection typically causes severe vomiting and diarrhoea, and is often fatal, particularly in young kittens. Treatment of affected cats is difficult and often unsuccessful. Infection of pregnant cats can result in the birth of kittens with permanent neurological problems. The virus which causes the disease is able to survive for long periods of time, and can be transmitted on contaminated equipment, shoes and clothing- so even indoor cats which don't have direct contact with other cats are potentially at risk.

CHLAMYDOPHILA FELIS


Infection with this bacterium causes inflammation and swelling of the eyes. Some cats are more likely to be exposed to this disease than others and your vet will be able to advise you whether your cat needs to be vaccinated.

Foreign travel and rabies vaccination

The Pet Travel Scheme (PETS) means that you can take your cat abroad with you, provided certain requirements are met. Before travelling, your pet needs to be microchipped, vaccinated against rabies and issued with a Pet Passport.

The Scheme only applies to countries within the EU and certain other listed countries, so it's vital to check the requirements for your destination country before travelling. For full details, speak to your vet or visit the DEFRA website (www.defra.gov.uk) for the latest information.

If you do take your cat abroad, remember that there may be other diseases or pests which are not found in the UK. Make sure you talk to your vet about the steps you can take to minimise the risks to your cat.



Why vaccinate
your cat?

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Why vaccination is important

Cats of all ages can and do become seriously ill or die from infectious diseases that could have been prevented through vaccination.

Vaccination offers the most effective way of protecting your cat against many of the most serious infectious diseases, including Cat flu, Feline Infectious Enteritis, Feline Leukaemia Virus and Chlamydia.

Many of these diseases are commonly reported in the UK, and they represent a potentially significant threat to your pet's health.

How vaccines work

Vaccines work by stimulating the body's immune system to mount a protective response against specific disease(s). The immune system then remembers these diseases, enabling it to defend the body against any natural exposure to that disease in the future.

Every vaccine lasts for different lengths of time, depending on the disease it is protecting against. Most animals require regular boosters to "remind" the immune system and enhance the level of protection.

Vaccination schedule

PRIMARY VACCINATION

In the first few weeks of life, kittens are normally protected against disease by antibodies (immunity) from their mother's milk. This immunity decreases over time and has usually disappeared by approximately 12 weeks of age. Vaccination is then needed to protect your kitten against disease.

Kittens generally receive a course of two vaccinations, with an interval of 3 to 4 weeks between injections. This primary course ensures that your kitten's immune system has the best chance of mounting a strong protective response.

BOOSTER VACCINATION

The immunity generated by the kitten course of vaccinations does not last for life. Regular booster vaccinations are necessary to maintain the highest possible level of protection against serious infectious diseases.

These regular annual visits also allow the vet to give your cat a full clinical examination and check up, and spot the early signs of any disease conditions which may be developing.

Diseases

The diseases against which cats are commonly vaccinated can cause serious, often fatal disease and can be very difficult to treat effectively. Prevention is much better than cure.

These diseases can be transmitted after direct contact with infected cats, but some of the viruses which cause disease can also survive in the outside environment. This means that your cat does not always need to come into contact with other cats to get sick, so vaccination is important for all cats, even those which live mainly indoors.

CAT FLU

This common disease is caused by two different viruses- Feline Herpesvirus and Feline Calicivirus. Signs of cat flu include fever, runny nose and eyes, sneezing and loss of appetite. Very young or old cats can develop pneumonia, which can be fatal in some cases. Affected cats can also suffer from ulceration of the mouth and tongue, making it difficult and painful to eat. Extensive nursing is often required to help affected cats fully recover from this disease. Some cats can go on to shed disease throughout their lives, spreading infection to other cats.

