

## V A C C I N A T I O N S

I am stating here clearly and unequivocally that I am not a veterinarian, nor do I have any veterinary training. With that being said, I do think I am an informed pet owner and am entitled to my opinion, which I am going to give you regarding vaccines.

Some of the information used to form my opinion and beliefs toward vaccinations was obtained from articles written by Dr. Karen Becker, DVM NMD of Mercola Healthy Pets. Her recommendation is that indoor house cats should NOT be vaccinated annually, especially if they never go outside or have access to other cats and she states: "I believe over vaccination is one of the main reasons the general health of our feline patients is deteriorating."

Once our children receive their core vaccines, they are done. They do not go back every year (nor do we adults) for the rest of their lives to get a booster. It isn't any different with pets. There is growing alarm that over vaccination is causing serious health issues in our pets including allergies, seizures, anemia, autoimmune disorders and cancer.

Since I have started breeding Siberians, I have had several of the kittens I have placed have very bad reactions to vaccines. None have occurred with their initial kitten shots that I give, they all have occurred with follow up yearly vaccines (rabies and distemper). One cat was fine on his one year visit when his booster shots were given. At age two, the same two vaccines were given and this poor boy was very sick for almost two months. The owner was even given a large sum of money from the drug company that produced the vaccine to compensate for the very hefty vet bills.

I have another Siberian that I bred that was given the 3 year rabies in another state and he did develop a tumor at the injection site by the time he was two. He had to have major surgery to have the tumor removed and until they got the biopsy report back, the vet was sure it was cancer. It is a miracle it was not, as over 95% of these tumors are cancerous.

Why do vets recommend getting your pets vaccinated every year, especially since current studies have found that most rabies vaccines last up to seven (7) years? The simple answer is economic dependence and this is what they have always done. The first vaccine schedule was set up as a recommendation, not a requirement. Yet over time, that recommendation has become a requirement with no scientific evidence to support this vaccine schedule. It is estimated that 70% of feline vet office visits are for vaccinations. If they did not tell you you have to bring your pet in every year for vaccines, the only time they would see our pets would be when they were sick or injured. Vaccines are the most lucrative part of their business.

It is also known that the mark up on the rabies vaccines is between 2,400% and 6,200% which would be equivalent to charging \$217.00 for a loaf of bread. And these profits pale in comparison to what the big drug companies are making. If the vaccine requirements were changed to what is appropriate, a lot of veterinary practices would go out of business and the drug companies would suffer a huge loss. So when studies are done that show a single rabies shot can last seven years, neither the vets nor the drug companies want you to know this. Also,

giving your cat/kitten a vaccine when it is already immune does not give any additional immunity and creates unnecessary risk to your pet.

Why would you risk an adverse vaccine reaction or chose to inject potentially toxic materials into your cat/kitten when there is a simple way to determine if your cat/kitten has maintained adequate immunity from a previous vaccine? Because you trust your vet and are told this is what you have to do. Well, this is not what you have to do. There is another option to drastically cut down the potential risk to your cat/kitten from vaccines and still ensure your cat/kitten is protected from disease. It is called a vaccine titer test. A vaccine titer test is a blood test that can tell you if your cat/kitten still has immunity from a previous vaccine. Almost all holistic vets believe it is much safer to replace revaccination schedules with routine titer testing.

The type of titer that best assesses the immune system's response to vaccines is called IFA, or indirect immunoflourescent antibody. The test should run around \$70.00 to \$100.00. If you are being told it costs a lot more than that you should go elsewhere. And reading the titer correctly is key. If a cat shows any titer at all, this means that he has either been vaccinated in the past (and responded to that vaccine) or he has been naturally exposed to the disease. According to the World Small Animal Veterinary Association Vaccine Guidelines Group (WSAVA-VGG), a positive test result would lead to the conclusion that revaccination is not required. Note that a low (versus high) titer does *not* necessarily mean the cat is *un*protected since memory cells and cell mediated immunity are, in all probability, present in full-force. This is very important to understand because the advent of titer-testing has led to unnecessary revaccination of many patients just because they came up low on their titer test.

Finally, if you do decide to vaccinate your cat, please ask that the rabies and distemper be given at different times. This will help lower the chance of a bad reaction.

In conclusion, I think that everyone needs to be informed about these vaccines and look at their particular living situation. If you live on a farm in an older house and there is a possibility of a bat getting into your home, then I think giving the rabies shot would be warranted. I also think that if you ask your vet what you should do, they are always going to say vaccinate. But there is nothing wrong with educating yourself and making your own decision.

Below is a list of common vaccinations and my recommendation on giving them.

**Feline Rhinotracheitis, Calicivirus, Panleukopenia Vaccine (NECESSARY).** This is the standard kitten vaccine used to protect the babies from the above listed illnesses. The recommendation has always been to give 1 shot at 8 weeks and a 2<sup>nd</sup> shot at 12 weeks. The vets will recommend that this shot be given every three years. Also, in July of 2011, the recommendation was changed to add a 3<sup>rd</sup> shot at 16 weeks. I was told it was changed because there were cases of distemper showing up. The only way your cat could get distemper is if it was let outside and since none of our cats are ever outside, I do not believe this extra vaccine is necessary. Since I place my babies at 12 weeks, if you choose to give this extra vaccine, you would have to take your baby to the vet to get it.

**Rabies Vaccine (1 year) (OPTIONAL).** There is a debate over the necessity of this vaccine. There is no scientific evidence that annual vaccines are necessary and once your pet receives immunity from their initial vaccines, this immunity lasts for about seven years, if not a lifetime, without boosters. If you are never allowing your cat/kitten outside, some feel it is unnecessary to take the risk involved in getting the vaccine. Should you decide to vaccinate your cat/kitten for rabies, the **ONE YEAR RABIES VACCINE** should be given. Again, they have studied the rabies vaccine and determined most of them last for about seven (7) years.

**Rabies Vaccine (3 year) DO NOT GET THIS VACCINE.** Most vets do not even offer the 3 year rabies, but if your vet does, please do not get it. The longevity additive (adjuvant) added to this vaccine to make it last 3 years has been found to cause cancerous tumors in cats at the injection site. The one year vaccine is much safer as it does not have the adjuvant.

**FeLV-FIV Vaccine. DO NOT GET THIS VACCINE.** According to reports this vaccine has been known to weaken the immune system and may predispose your cat/kitten to the disease. There have been known to be severe reactions from the vaccine as well. The American Association of Feline Practitioners (AAFP) and the Academy of Feline Medicine (AFM) have recently indicated that this vaccination should ONLY BE given to cats that will be exposed to other cats with the FeLV virus. The other reason this should not be given is that all of my breed cats are tested and negative for FeLV & FEV, so there is no way your kitten could have it. If you need proof from my vet, just let me know.

**FIP (Feline Infectious Peritonitis) Vaccine. DO NOT GET THIS VACCINE.** According to reports this vaccine is totally ineffective and may predispose your cat to the disease. Also not recommended by the AAFP/AFM unless your cat will be exposed to the virus.

**\*NOTE:** Several articles regarding vaccines are included on your Cat Information Disk that will be given to you when you pick up your kitten.

[www.shellyscats.com](http://www.shellyscats.com)