



## Vaccinations

### **What are vaccines?**

Vaccines are products designed to trigger protective immune responses and prepare the immune system to fight future infections from disease-causing agents. Vaccines provide immunity against one or several diseases that can lessen the severity or prevent certain diseases altogether.

### **Why is it important to vaccinate my pet?**

Experts agree that widespread use of vaccinations within the last century has prevented death and disease in millions of animals. Vaccinations protect your pet from highly contagious and deadly diseases and improve your pet's overall quality of life.

### **Do vaccinations ensure protection?**

For most pets, vaccination is effective in preventing future disease and only rarely will a vaccinated pet have insufficient immunity to fight off the disease. It is important to follow the vaccination schedule provided by your veterinarian to reduce the possibility of a gap in protection.

### **Are there risks to vaccinating my pet?**

Any type of medical treatment has associated risks associated, but the risk should be weighed against the benefits of protecting your pet, your family and your community from potentially fatal diseases. The majority of pets respond well to vaccines.

### **5 Reasons to Vaccinate Your Pet**

1. Vaccinations prevent many pet illnesses.
2. Vaccinations can help avoid costly treatments for diseases that can be prevented.
3. Vaccinations prevent diseases that can be passed not only from animal to animal but also from animal to human.
4. Diseases prevalent in wildlife, such as rabies and distemper, can infect unvaccinated pets.
5. Many areas, local or state ordinances require certain vaccinations of household pets.

### **Why do puppies and kittens require a series of vaccinations?**

Very young animals are highly susceptible to infectious disease because their immune system is not yet fully mature. They receive protection through antibodies in their mother's milk, but the protection is not long-lasting and there may be gaps in protection as the milk antibodies decrease and their immune system is still maturing.

In many instances, the first dose of a vaccine serves to prime the animal's immune system against the virus or bacteria while subsequent doses help further stimulate the immune system to produce the important antibodies needed to protect an animal from diseases.