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Vaccination Schedule for Felines

The first year in a kitten's life is one of new experiences. As our pets' guardians, we need to ensure their safety through preventative measures. In today's living conditions, it is impossible to isolate our cats from exposure to diseases. Vaccinations play a vital role in protecting our pets from some of the most significant infectious threats to their health. These are our general guidelines that will be tailored for your individual pet.

Your kitten's first visit to the veterinarian is at 6-8 weeks of age. The kitten is examined and, if healthy, given the first "distemper" vaccine. The *distemper vaccine (or FVRCP)* is actually a 3-in-1 vaccine which includes feline rhinotracheitis, calicivirus, and panleukopenia. Subsequent vaccinations are administered every 3-4 weeks until the kitten is at least 15-16 weeks of age. This is usually a series of 3 vaccinations. Thereafter, boosters for FVRCP are given annually or every three years, depending on your cat's individual needs.

The first rabies vaccine is administered to kittens at a minimum of 12 weeks of age, and is protective for 1 year. Subsequent vaccinations are protective for 3 years. It is critical to have your pet kept up-to-date on this crucial vaccine. The rabies vaccine is required by law, and very strict regulations apply if a pet is unvaccinated or overdue for this crucial vaccine. Rabies is prevalent in this area. If your pet comes into contact with a rabies suspect or incurs an unknown bite wound, a rabies booster must be administered.

Feline Leukemia (FelV) and Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV) suppress an infected cat's immune system and can result in uncontrolled infections and cancers, ultimately causing death. Cats contract these viruses from their mother at birth, from bites and scratches, or from contacting the saliva of other cats, as during shared grooming or sharing food dishes. Humans can NOT catch these viruses from their cats. It is recommended that cats be tested for FelV/FIV as early as 6 weeks of age. There is a vaccination available for FelV, but not FIV. The first vaccination is boosted in 3-4 weeks, and then boosted annually. The FelV vaccine is highly recommended if your cat goes outdoors, or lives with other cats which go outdoors.

Vaccine	Earliest Age	Duration
FVRCP	8 weeks	Given 3-4 weeks apart until at least 15-16 weeks of age, then booster annually or every 3 years
Rabies	12 weeks	1 year, then booster every 3 years
Feline Leukemia	10 weeks	First vaccines given 3-4 weeks apart, then booster annually