

## Our Current Vaccination Recommendations

Over the past several years, vaccination protocols have become quite complicated. This is mainly because:

- New vaccines are becoming available
- New research is showing that the duration of immunity lasts much longer for some vaccines
- Serious side effects have been noted with the use of some kinds of vaccines

The development of vaccines has had such a huge impact on our ability to prevent infectious disease and they are vitally important to your pet's preventive care routine, but every animal has different vaccination needs that vary depending on age, environment, and other factors that determine exposure to disease. We evaluate each animal individually to create a vaccine plan specifically for your pet, but we have developed a basic protocol to help us determine what will work best in most cases. Our current protocols are derived from research and recommendations put forth by the American Animal Hospital Association, the American Association of Feline Practitioners, and other sources.

Vaccines are classified into **core** and **non-core** vaccines.

**Core** vaccines are vaccinations that ALL animals should have.

For cats, these include:

- Feline Herpesvirus (Rhinotracheitis)
- Panleukopenia
- Calicivirus
- Leukemia
- Rabies

For dogs, these include:

- Canine Distemper
- Parvovirus
- Adenovirus Type 2 (Hepatitis)
- Rabies

There are also a number of **non-core** vaccines that may be of benefit for some animals, but are not always necessary for all animals.

For cats, these include:

- Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV, sometimes called Feline AIDS)
- Chlamydia
- Feline Infectious Peritonitis (FIP)
- Bordetella (Kennel Cough)
- Giardia

For dogs, these include:

- Bordetella (Kennel Cough)
- Coronavirus
- Giardia
- Leptospirosis
- Lyme
- Parainfluenza (Kennel Cough)
- Porphyromonas (dental disease vaccine)
- Rattlesnake vaccine

As with any drug, there are always potential risks from vaccination, the greatest of which is inducing a tumor called a fibrosarcoma. This risk is greatest in cats and when using certain types of vaccines. Some animals may also exhibit an allergic reaction to a vaccine which is most commonly very mild, but can also be serious.

Because of these associated risks, our recommendation is to only vaccinate with vaccines that are actually necessary, and then, only as frequently as required. We must emphasize here that as far as the core vaccines go, *any risk involved with vaccination is greatly outweighed by the immunity given by the vaccine*. If your animal gets one of these core diseases, it can be very serious.

With these risks and benefits in mind, we have developed the following vaccination protocols.

Cats:

- **Rabies:** We have switched to a *non-adjuvanted recombinant Rabies vaccine* which has a much lower risk of inducing fibrosarcomas. It is administered around 12-16 weeks of age and then annually thereafter.
- **RCP** (*Rhinotracheitis, Calicivirus, and Panleukopenia*) is given at 6, 12, and 14 weeks, 1 year, then every 5 years following.
- **Feline Leukemia:** We recommend initial vaccinations for all cats, but extended protocols for cats that are exclusively indoors with no exposure to outside cats. Kittens receive initial vaccines at 8 and 12 weeks, one year, then boosters annually for those in a HIGH RISK environment.
- We do not recommend vaccinating for FIV, FIP, Chlamydia, Giardia, or Bordetella.

Dogs:

- **Rabies:** We vaccinate for Rabies at 12-16 weeks, 1 year and then every 3 years thereafter, the most extended schedule allowed by law.
- **DHPP** (*Distemper, Hepatitis, Parvovirus, Parainfluenza*): is given at 6, 10, and 14 weeks of age, 1 year, and then every 5 years following.
- **Bordetella:** We recommend that all dogs receive a Bordetella vaccination at 8 and 12 weeks of age, then every year thereafter. For dogs who go to a boarding kennel, groomer or to the dog park, we recommend boosters every 6 months.
- **Leptospirosis:** Only those dogs in a HIGH RISK environment should receive this vaccination at 12 and 16 weeks, then annually.
- We do not recommend vaccinating for Coronavirus, Lyme, Giardia, Rattlesnake venom, or Porphyromonas.

The reminders you receive from us will begin to reflect these new protocols. Our other preventive care recommendations will continue to remain the same, although we may remind for them more diligently in the future.

If you have ANY questions regarding these changes or would just like to discuss your pet's individual preventive care needs, please feel free to call or email with questions. We will be pleased to discuss the recommendations in further detail or provide more information.

Thank you for your understanding in this matter and we look forward to a long, happy, and healthy relationship with you and your beloved pet.

Dr. Dyal and the Staff at Guardian Pet Hospital