



# Vaccinating Your Kitten

## Why do we give vaccinations?

Vaccinations are injections we give to kittens as a scientifically proven way to protect our loved ones against potentially fatal diseases. They work in the same way as the vaccinations we give to children and are just as important.

## How do vaccinations work?

The injection we give contains a very small amount of the disease virus or bacteria which has either been killed or microscopically modified so it cannot harm our kittens. This stimulates the kitten's immune system to build an army of dedicated immune cells that are ready to fight off the real disease should it ever try to infect your loved one.

## What do we vaccinate for?

**Cat Flu** - The commonest strains of Herpes virus and Calicivirus are covered with the vaccination.

**Feline Enteritis virus** – A cause of severe often fatal vomiting and diarrhoea similar to parvovirus in dogs.

The above viruses are given together in one injection. This injection course is required for entrance into catteries.

**Feline leukaemia virus** – This virus is the second most common cause of premature death of cats in the UK after road traffic accidents. The virus can be carried for several years before causing illness. As well as causing leukaemia in some cats the virus also causes tumours to form in various organs. The immune system is also suppressed leading to many other diseases. If a cat is already infected with feline leukaemia virus, then the vaccination offers no protection. We do not routinely test cats before vaccination because of the cost but if you would like to have your kitten tested please ask.

## When should we give vaccinations?

Kittens can be vaccinated from 8 weeks of age. They require 2 injections, their second will need to be given 3 weeks after their initial injection.

## Should kittens go outside once their initial vaccination course is complete?

While kittens will be protected from the diseases mentioned above after their vaccination course is completed, it is not recommended they are allowed to roam outside freely until they are neutered. Kittens become sexually active from a young age, from 3-4 months of age, and will actively seek out a mate to procreate. Because of this, we recommend keeping all kittens indoors until they are neutered, which can be done from 4 months of age (see the neutering section).

## Should we give annual boosters against these diseases as well?

Yes! The vaccines we give are designed to protect your kitten for a certain length of time. To keep your kitten fully protected they will need an annual booster vaccine every year for the rest of their life. Missing these booster vaccines will put your kitten at risk of getting these devastating diseases.

