

Feline Vaccines:

At EMEVC we believe in preventative medicine to help protect your pet and your family from diseases. One of our core beliefs includes giving vaccinations to help protect your pet from potentially life threatening diseases. Some vaccines are legally required by the state of Maine (rabies) while others have been chosen due to our geographic location or life style of your pet (indoor vs outdoor) or due to the devastating effects of the disease.

Cats can develop a vaccine associated cancer called vaccine associated sarcoma. Although this cancer is a risk of vaccinating your cat, we believe the risks of acquiring certain diseases are higher than the chance of developing cancer. There are cat specific vaccines that are smaller volume and avoid certain ingredients that may have been associated with vaccine associated sarcomas. Furthermore, vaccinating your cat lower on the leg instead of near the hip or between the shoulder blades can allow for easier removal any masses that may grow. As with all medications and injections, vaccine reaction is also a possible complication. Hives, vomiting, diarrhea, and anaphylaxis can be seen with vaccines but we do monitor your pet and have medications to help with any reactions they may have.

Please talk with your regular veterinarian regarding what would be the best vaccine protocol for your pet.

Core Vaccines:

Rabies: * only vaccine available at EMEVC for cats with bites of unknown origin*

This vaccine should be given when your pet is 16 weeks of age, at one years of age, and then every 1-3 years. Rabies booster vaccine should be given to all animals with a bite wound of unknown origin or if contact with a rabid animal is suspected. Rabies is a fatal disease that can be passed from infected animals through a bite wound. This disease can be contagious to you and your family. This vaccine is legally required by the state of Maine and is strongly recommended except in very rare diseases where an exemption can be applied for.

Distemper/Rhinotracheitis/Calicivirus(FVRCP):

Commonly called the cat distemper vaccine is a combination of three diseases. This vaccine is typically given at 8, 12 and 16 weeks of age. This vaccine is then repeated at 1 years of age and can be repeated anywhere from every 1 to 3 years.

Feline Distemper:

Although this disease is called feline distemper, it is not related to dog distemper and is actually caused by a completely different virus (feline panleukopenia virus is a parvo virus). This virus is highly contagious and can last in the environment for months to years. Survivors of the disease can spread the virus in their feces for up to 6 weeks after recovery. This virus attacks quickly dividing cells such as the bone marrow and gastrointestinal tract and in young animals can destroy part of the brain and eyes. Kittens can be infected while in their mother's belly and can be born with permanent brain damage causing poor coordination, trouble walking, and tremors. This disease is contagious to ONLY cats and cannot be transmitted to people or dogs.

Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis:

Feline respiratory disease complex causes coughing, sneezing, runny eyes, excessive salivation and oral and ocular ulcers in cats. One of the viruses that can trigger this disease is the feline is the Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis virus, a herpes virus. This disease is contagious to ONLY cats and cannot be transmitted to people or dogs. Cats with exposure with this virus can spread it by sneezing or coughing and can shed virus for many months. Stress can trigger shedding of this virus. Cats who live in multiple cat households and shelter cats are at higher risk of exposure to this virus. Some cats will recover from this virus with no medications while others can develop corneal or oral ulcers and pneumonia. Kittens may go off food and become profoundly anorexic.

Calicivirus:

This virus is the other main virus responsible for the feline respiratory disease complex mentioned above. This virus likes to attach the oral mucosa and lung tissue. Feline Calicivirus typically continuously sheds unlike the feline viral rhinotracheitis virus which can intermittently shed. Cats with calicivirus will have multiple ulcers form on their tongue and hard palate. Some cats will require a feeding tube if the ulcerations prevents them from eating. The more virulent calicivirus will also cause ulcerations in the lungs. This disease is contagious to ONLY cats and cannot be transmitted to people or dogs.

Feline Non Core Vaccines:

Feline Leukemia Virus:

Feline Leukemia Virus (FELV) remains one of the common causes of illness and death in our cat population. Infection with this virus can cause immunodeficiency, life threatening anemia (low red blood cell count), lymphoma/leukemia, infertility, and neurologic disease. This virus is typically shed in the saliva and is transmitted from cat to cat by sharing food or water bowls, nose to nose contact, and grooming. This virus is very fragile and prolonged contact (living together or sharing things etc) is needed for transmission between adults. This disease can be transmitted to kittens while they are in their mother's belly and by breast feeding. We typically give this vaccine to outdoor cats or cats entering an FELV positive home at 12 and 16 weeks. Adult cats receiving this vaccine for the first time will need a booster injection 3-4 weeks after the first injection. Although this virus has been able to infect human cells in the laboratory there is no evidence of it infecting people naturally.

Feline Immunodeficiency virus:

Feline Immunodeficiency Virus or FIV is a similar virus to human HIV. It is typically transmitted by bite wounds. It causes similar clinical signs of decreasing the efficacy of the immune system and predisposing patients with this virus to infection and cancer. Currently there is a vaccine available for this disease but its effectiveness is questionable. At this time we do NOT recommend using this vaccine. This disease cannot infect people.