

The Importance of Vaccinations



There are lots of nasty diseases out there that cats can catch. Vaccinations are the best way to protect your cat from some of the worst ones.

For kittens or cats who haven't been vaccinated in the last year, they will need a primary vaccination course to get their protection started. This primary course consists of two injections given three weeks apart.

Kittens can be vaccinated from 9 weeks old. At the time of the vaccination your cat should receive a full health-assessment.

After the primary vaccination course, your cat will then need to be vaccinated every year to keep up their protection against the diseases. We often call this a booster vaccination as it boosts your cats immunity.

At BCWR Kittens the diseases we recommend to protect cats against with vaccinations are:

Feline Viral Infectious Respiratory Disease (Cat Flu)

Feline Panleucopaenia (Enteritis)

Feline Leukaemia

Rabies (Only required for cats travelling aboard)

Cat Flu spreads very easily by direct and indirect contact between cats. Cats entering shows or being boarded during holidays are particularly at risk because they are in close proximity to each other. Signs of the Cat Flu are runny nose, Weepy eyes, sneezing, coughing and tiredness. If treated promptly, Cat Flu is hardly ever fatal, but can make your cat ill for some time and may leave it with snuffles and breathing difficulties for the rest of its life. One of the most common causes of Cat Flu is Feline Calcivirus. There is now a new vaccine that contains two recent strains of Feline Calcivirus, which means it provides the most up to date protection against this common disease. In order to ensure adult cats receive the full benefit of this updated protection, we recommend that they receive two doses of the new vaccine.

Feline Panleucopaenia or Enteritis is highly contagious and can affect cats of any age but is most common and severe in kittens. It causes acute depression, vomiting, diarrhoea, dehydration and in many cases death. The few cats that do survive the disease tend to suffer from other diseases due to the damage caused to immune system. The virus which causes Feline enteritis can remain active in the environment for a very long time and spreads easily via contact with infected cats or their saliva, urine or faeces.

Feline Leukaemia is currently considered to be the single most significant infectious cause of death among the cat population in the western world. Cats of any age, but particular those up to 3 years of age, can be affected. The symptoms vary widely and range from damage to the immune system (making your cat much less able to fight off other infections) through to persistent anaemia and cancer.

Cats only need to be vaccinated against **Rabies** if they are going to be taken abroad as this disease isn't currently seen in the UK.

For further information about vaccinating your cat please contact your vet.