

August 2021

## Immunization Awareness Month

Vaccines stimulate the immune system to respond to different diseases in order to protect them from different bacterial and viral infections. With August being Immunization Awareness Month, let's go over different vaccines given to dogs & cats, and what they aim to protect against.

### Core vs. Non-Core Vaccines

There are many different vaccines available to our pets. However, some vaccines are more important than others. Core vaccines are vaccinations that are required for your pet, as without them your pet can become seriously ill. On the other hand, non-core vaccines are recommended depending on your pet's lifestyle, where you live, etc. For example, the rattlesnake vaccine is recommended for pets in the Southwestern US, but is not really needed in the Northeast US. Likewise, if a dog mostly stays at home and doesn't see other dogs, the Bordetella (kennel cough) vaccine is not necessarily needed for that dog, whereas a dog that goes to the groomers frequently or exercises at dog parks would need the Bordetella vaccine to protect against the contagious respiratory illness.

### Vaccines for Dogs and Cats

So what vaccines are considered “**core**” & “**non-core**” for your pets? See the list to see what vaccines your pets should be getting!

#### Core Vaccines:

**Rabies** = this is the most important vaccine. Rabies is a 100% fatal disease once clinical signs are seen. Not only this, it is required by law!

**DHPP** = this vaccine protects against several different diseases in dogs, including distemper, hepatitis, parvovirus, and parainfluenza virus. This vaccine is often given in a “puppy series” every 3-4 weeks until about 16 weeks of age, and then either yearly or every 3 years thereafter.

**FVRCP** = this vaccine protects against several viral upper respiratory diseases that cats tend to contract (the letters stand for feline viral rhinotracheitis, calicivirus, and panleukopenia).

#### Non-Core Vaccines:

**Leptospirosis** = this is a bacterial infection that can cause kidney failure in dogs. It is spread by wildlife urine, and is recommended in dogs that commonly go outside. This disease is zoonotic, meaning that it can spread to humans as well!

**Lyme** = this is a bacterial infection spread by ticks. In dogs, Lyme disease can cause arthritis as well as kidney disease. There is only a Lyme vaccine for dogs, not cats.

**Bordetella** = this vaccine protects against a few different infections that causes kennel cough in dogs. This is especially important if you are going to board your dog, take them to a groomer, or go to a dog park.

**Influenza** = this is another viral respiratory infection that is seen in dogs. In the US, the two most common influenza vaccines are for H3N8 and H3N2, often given together in one vaccine.

**Feline Leukemia** = this is a viral infection that is spread by respiratory secretions between cats. It is an immunodeficiency virus, which weakens the cat's immune system and makes them more prone to infections. It also lowers their lifespan and can increase their risk of developing certain cancers such as leukemia and lymphoma.



Best regards,  
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