

Vaccination of Your Pet

Vaccination of the companion animal has been a hot bed of debate in the last decade. Many believe that society is over vaccinating both our children, and our animals. This informative handout is not to promote or dissuade pet owners into continuing or discontinuing any vaccination protocol, but to only provide an overview of the legal requirements and some of the more commonly available vaccines. Note most vaccines require a “kitten” or “puppy” series to build up antibodies in the immune system.

Ferrets

- Rabies – In Prince George’s County, ferrets over the age of 4 months old are required to have a valid Rabies Vaccination.
- Distemper – A ferret distemper vaccine is available from veterinarians specializing in exotic or pocket pets. This is typically an annual vaccine which provides protection from the airborne virus which causes both canine and ferret distemper.

Cats

- Rabies – In Prince George’s County, kittens and cats over the age of 4 months old are required to have a valid Rabies Vaccination.
- FPRC (feline distemper) – Combination vaccine given annually which protects against upper respiratory illnesses such as Rhinotracheitis, Calicivirus, Panleukopenia.
- Feline Leukemia – May be combined into a “5-in-1” vaccine with FPRC. Given annually to protect against infection of the Feline Leukemia Virus.
- FIV – Feline Immunodeficiency Virus; given annually to protect against infection of FIV from infected cats. *NOTE – Will cause a false positive on any FIV blood screening test after vaccination.
- FIP – Feline Infectious Peritonitis; given annually to protect against infection the corona virus which can lead to wet or dry form FIP.

Dogs

- Rabies – In Prince George’s County, puppies and dogs over the age of 4 months old are required to have a valid Rabies Vaccination.
- Distemper – Combination vaccine given annually which protects against the airborne viruses causing distemper virus, canine adenovirus, parainfluenza, and canine parvovirus.
- Leptospirosis – May be combined into a “5-in-1” vaccine with the distemper vaccine. Given annually to protect against infection of many strains of Lepto.
- Bordetella – “kennel cough” vaccine, given annually to protect against the bacteria causing kennel cough. May be required by groomers or boarding facilities.
- Lyme – Given annually to protect against the bacteria transmitted by ticks causing Lyme diseases.
- Canine Influenza – Given annually to protect against the H3N8 Virus, which has been found in close quartered areas such as shelter, race tracks, and boarding facilities. May be required by some groomers or boarding facilities.

For additional medical information or to set up a vaccination schedule, contact your local veterinarian.