



# Preventive Care for Cats: The Basics

## Vaccinations

**FVRCP Combo** – *Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis, Calicivirus, Panleukopenia* (sometimes referred to as feline distemper)

- Kittens under 4 months of age should get a series of FVRCP vaccinations every 3-4 weeks (usually works out to 3 or 4 total vaccines).
- Cats over 4 months of age that have never been vaccinated should get 2 vaccines 3 to 4 weeks apart. Adults should get a booster every 1 to 3 years, depending on your vet's recommendations.

## Feline Leukemia Virus (FeLV)

- FeLV is a deadly virus that can be spread from cat to cat via bite wounds, mutual grooming, or from mother to kitten in the womb or milk. Any cat that goes outside is at risk of contracting the virus from another infected cat.
- **All** kittens and cats over 3 months of age should be tested for Feline Leukemia and **all** cats that go outside should be vaccinated.
- Cats or kittens that have never been vaccinated should get 2 vaccines 3 to 4 weeks apart (beginning at about 12 weeks of age for kittens).
- Annual boosters are recommended.

**Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV)** is another deadly virus spread from cat to cat via bite wounds. All cats and kittens over 6 months of age should be tested for FIV. Unfortunately, there is no effective vaccine available for FIV. The best way to prevent FIV (and FeLV) infection in your cat is to keep her 100% indoors!

**Rabies** -- By New Mexico law, all dogs and cats over the age of 3 months must be vaccinated against rabies. Puppies and kittens can get their first rabies anytime after they are over 12 weeks.

- A rabies booster will be due 1 year after the first vaccine is given (no matter what age). Each booster thereafter will be due every 3 years by law (*every year in some locations*).

## Identification

While we **strongly** encourage keeping cats indoors and dogs contained within a fence or on a leash, and cats indoors, we understand that accidents happen and our pets can get loose. For this reason, it is very important for pets to have adequate identification so that they can be returned to you if lost.

- **Microchipping** – A microchip is a tiny computer chip that has an identification number programmed into it. The chip, about the size of a grain of rice, is permanently injected under the skin with a hypodermic needle. The chip and identification number are detected through the skin with an electronic reading device that almost all animal shelters and veterinary clinics have on hand. When you register with the microchip company, your pet can be identified anywhere in the US.
- **Tags** – It is very important to keep a current rabies tag on all dogs and cats. Not only does it prove that your pet is up-to-date on rabies vaccination, but the number on the tag can be used to track you down if your pet is lost. Personalized identification tags can be made and purchased here at the Shelter or from most vet hospitals or pet supply stores.

## Flea and Tick Control

- Fleas and ticks are not only a nuisance to you and your pet, but they can spread serious blood borne infections.
- Some flea products are toxic to cats! Always read the label and only use products specifically labeled for use on cats. We recommend topical, monthly flea and tick preventive medications such as Frontline™ or Revolution™ that are very effective, easy-to-use and non-toxic to pets and people.