



VACCINATION PROTOCOL

for Kittens

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- 8 weeks of age - 1st vaccination
- Panleukopenia/Rhinotracheitis/Calici
- 12 weeks of age - 2nd vaccination
- Panleukopenia/Rhinotracheitis/Calici/Feline Leukemia
- 16 weeks of age - 3rd vaccination
- Panleukopenia/Rhinotracheitis/Calici/Feline Leukemia

Contrary to popular belief, there is no magic "kitten series" of vaccines. The number and frequency of vaccines given to kittens is based on age and the status of their immune system. When kittens are born, they receive colostrum from their mother in the first two days of nursing which gives the kittens a passive immunity. In other words, everything that she is immune to, the kittens will be too. If mom has had a good vaccination history, she will convey her immunities to everything she has been vaccinated for to her babies. These maternal antibodies start to sharply decline in the kittens when they are 8 weeks old. At this point, we begin their vaccinations.

If the mother has not been vaccinated or if her vaccination status is unknown (in the case of a stray), it is recommended to

start vaccinations at 6 weeks of age. However, this is the *only* time that this is recommended.

If the mother has been vaccinated, starting vaccinations before 8 weeks can actually create what is called a "viral window". The vaccine can be completely overridden by the maternal antibodies, or the two can cancel each other out leaving the kitten exposed to these deadly diseases.

Under the age of 16 weeks, a kitten's immune system is immature, and can only hold onto the immunity from a vaccine for about a month. So, we vaccinate once a month until the kitten's immune system is mature at 16 weeks of age. At this point, the kitten will respond as an adult animal and hold onto the immunity for a period of a year when the vaccines should be boosted.

If a kitten is over the age of 16 weeks when their vaccines are started, they should receive two of the Panleukopenia/Rhinotracheitis/Calici/Feline Leukemia combo vaccines a minimum of two weeks apart, and one Rabies vaccine.