

## Welcome to Benicia Cat Clinic's Quarterly Newsletter

Please look for us on Facebook and "like" us!



### Have you heard about our Client Referral Program?

If you refer someone to us, and they schedule an appointment, both of you will receive a \$20 credit on your account!

## Preventative Health Care for Your Cat

### Vaccinations

Vaccinating your cat has long been considered one of the easiest ways to help him live a long, healthy life. Although vaccination has the potential to protect pets against life-threatening diseases, vaccination is not without its risks.

#### What Are Vaccines?

Vaccines help prepare the body's immune system to fight the invasion of disease-causing organisms.

#### How Important Are Vaccines?

Vaccines are very important in managing the health of your cats. However, not every cat needs to be vaccinated against every disease. It is important to discuss a vaccination protocol that's right for your cat, with your veterinarian. The decision to vaccinate should be based on age, medical history, environment and lifestyle – the risks and benefits for each individual cat. Most vets highly recommend administering core vaccines to healthy cats.

#### What Are Core Vaccines?

The American Association of Feline Practitioners divides vaccines into two categories—core and non-core. Core vaccines are considered vital to all cats and protect against panleukopenia, feline calicivirus, feline herpes virus type 1 (rhinotracheitis) and rabies. Non-core vaccines are given depending on the cat's lifestyle; these include vaccines for feline leukemia virus. Your veterinarian can determine which vaccines are best for your cat.

#### Are Any Vaccines Required By Law?

Each state has its own laws governing the administration of the rabies vaccine. In California, each County has its own laws. Per the California Department of Public Health: "In California, most cases of rabies occur in skunks and bats. Domestic animals account for three percent of animal rabies, and the rest occurs in a variety of wild animals, including foxes. Keep rabies vaccinations up-to-date for all cats and dogs."

As recently as January 2013, an indoor only cat in the city of Glen Ellen contracted the disease, and died. The cat was not vaccinated against Rabies. It is assumed that the cat was bitten by a bat infected with Rabies.

#### How Often Should My Adult Cat Be Vaccinated?

This will depend on the type of vaccine, your cat's age, medical history, environment and lifestyle. Adult cats might be revaccinated annually for Rabies, but every three years for FVRCP. Our Doctors will help you to determine the correct vaccination schedule for your cat.

Healthy older cats, and those with chronic, but stable, conditions should be vaccinated the same way as if they were younger adults. However, any cat that is sick, whether kitten or adult, should not be vaccinated until they have recovered from their illness.

#### When Should My Kitten Be Vaccinated?

Kittens are the main target population for vaccination, because they are more susceptible to infection than adult cats, and they tend to develop more severe disease compared to adults. Following is the currently recommended vaccination protocol for kittens.

When the kitten is around six to eight weeks of age, your veterinarian will begin to administer a series of vaccines at three- or four-week intervals until the kitten reaches 16 weeks of age. These will certainly include FVRCP and may include feline leukemia. Rabies is administered at 4 months. It is very important for your kitten to get the entire vaccine series. The American Association of Feline Practitioners recommends the FeLV vaccine for all kittens, with a booster given at 1 year.

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#### Are There Any Risks Associated With Vaccines?

Most cats show no side effects from vaccination. Vaccine reactions are usually minor and short-lived. Clinical signs may include:

- ❖ Fever
- ❖ Wheezing
- ❖ Lethargy
- ❖ Loss of appetite
- ❖ Vomiting
- ❖ Diarrhea
- ❖ Swelling, redness and pain around the injection site
- ❖ Lameness



There are other, less common side effects like injection site tumors and immune disease associated with vaccination. As with any medical procedure, there is always a small chance of side effects. In most cases, the risks are much smaller than the risks of disease itself. Your veterinarian will assess your cat's medical history before he is vaccinated.

**IF YOU SUSPECT YOUR CAT IS HAVING A REACTION TO A VACCINE, CALL YOUR VETERINARIAN IMMEDIATELY.**

### Following is a list and description of the most commonly used vaccines.

**FVRCP – Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis, Calicivirus, Panleukopenia:** Feline viral rhinotracheitis is the description used for the respiratory infection caused by the herpes virus. Feline calicivirus and feline herpes virus type I are responsible for 80-90% of infectious feline upper respiratory tract diseases. Most cats are exposed to either, or both, of these viruses at some time in their lives, usually first as kittens. After a cat recovers from the initial infection, the rhinotracheitis virus remains in the body as a latent infection. The dormant virus can be reactivated during times of stress, and/or illness, resulting in a recurrence of clinical signs. During these recurrences, infected cats shed the virus profusely in their eye, nasal, and oral secretions, increasing the risk of infecting other cats. The vaccines will minimize the severity of upper respiratory infections, although none will prevent disease in all situations. Feline panleukopenia is a highly contagious and deadly viral disease in cats; it is very hardy, can survive extremes of temperature and humidity for many months, and is resistant to most available disinfectants. Until recent years, panleukopenia was the most serious infectious disease of cats, claiming thousands of lives every year. Thanks to the highly effective vaccines currently available, panleukopenia is now considered to be an uncommon disease. However, because of the serious nature of the disease and the continued presence of virus in the environment. FVRCP vaccination is highly recommended for all cats.

**Rabies Virus Vaccine:** Rabies is an increasing threat to cats. At the present time, the number of reported feline rabies cases in the United States far exceeds that of all other domestic animals. Rabies in cats is also a major public health concern. Because of the routinely fatal outcome of infection in cats, and the potential for human exposure, rabies vaccination is highly recommended for all cats; it is required by law in most areas of the country; in California, it is governed by County. We recommend this vaccine for all cats.

**Feline Leukemia Virus Vaccine:** Feline leukemia virus (FeLV) is the leading viral killer of cats. The virus is spread from cat-to-cat through bite wounds, through casual contact (shared bowls) with infected cats, and from an infected mother cat to her kittens. The individuals most at risk of infection are outdoor cats, indoor/outdoor cats, and cats exposed to such individuals. Cats living in households with FeLV-infected cats or with cats of unknown infection status are also at risk. Indoor-only cats with no exposure to potentially infected cats are extremely unlikely to become infected. FeLV vaccines are recommended for all cats and kittens at risk of exposure to the virus.

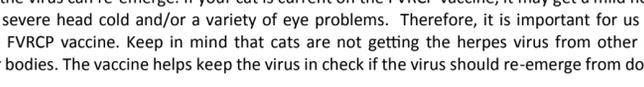
The FeLV vaccine is a non-core vaccine in adults, however, the American Association of Feline Practitioners and the Academy of Feline Medicine feel that all kittens should be vaccinated against FeLV, because kittens are especially susceptible to FeLV, and the lifestyles of kittens often change after adoption, increasing their risk for FeLV exposure. A booster vaccine should be given one year later in cats that remain at risk for exposure to FeLV, however, this is also something that you should discuss with your Veterinarian.

#### Do I really need to vaccinate my indoor-only cat? The BIG question!

The rabies vaccine is required by law in some counties in California. The odds of your cat acquiring rabies are, however, extremely small. If your cat were to bite someone, and your cat was current on his rabies vaccine, your cat could be quarantined at your home or at a veterinary facility for five days. If no signs of rabies developed after five days, then your cat would be deemed free of rabies. However, if your cat was not current on his vaccine, then you would be legally required to quarantine your cat at a shelter (Solano County Animal Control in Fairfield) for 10 days or at veterinary facility for 5 days (at YOUR own expense – the shelter charges, too). Most vets are reluctant to quarantine a non-current cat as they cannot be handled at all during the quarantine period. You could also be legally responsible for the cost of the bite-victim's (very expensive) post-exposure rabies treatment and could, potentially, be sued!

Play it safe. Keep your cat's rabies vaccine status up to date.

The main reason that we continue to vaccinate our indoor-only cats against FVRCP is actually the herpesvirus. Once a cat has contracted the disease, the virus will stay in the body forever, lying dormant until the cat gets sick or stressed, at which point the virus can re-emerge. If your cat is current on the FVRCP vaccine, it may get a mild head cold. If not, it can get a very severe head cold and/or a variety of eye problems. Therefore, it is important for us to keep our cats current on the FVRCP vaccine. Keep in mind that cats are not getting the herpes virus from other cats; the virus is already in their bodies. The vaccine helps keep the virus in check if the virus should re-emerge from dormancy.



### Dental Health

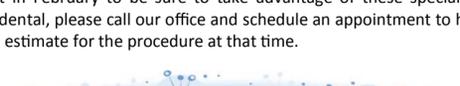
#### Why It's So Important...

- ❖ Oral disease is the most frequently diagnosed health problem in cats. An estimated 70% of cats show signs of dental disease by age 3.
- ❖ Cats can develop "cavity-like" erosive lesions on their teeth. These lesions are very painful and lesions have shown that 28% of domestic cats develop at least one of these lesions in their lifetime.
- ❖ When bacteria build up in a cat's mouth, plaque and tartar start to form. If left untreated, this accumulation can lead to periodontal disease – an irreversible condition that damages the support structures of the teeth. Plaque is a colorless film containing bacteria that can cause infection, destroying gums, bone and other tissues that support the teeth.
- ❖ Periodontal disease, if left unchecked, can lead to infection, pain, odor and, eventually, tooth loss, as well as systemic illness.



### February is Dental Month!

We'd like to remind you that February is Dental Month. We offer special dental discounts during the month of February. If you've had a dental recommendation for your kitty in the last 6 months, please call our office soon to schedule your appointment in February to be sure to take advantage of these special offers! If you are unsure whether your kitty needs a dental, please call our office and schedule an appointment to have her teeth checked. We will be happy to give you an estimate for the procedure at that time.



### Holiday Hazards

#### 1. Ribbons and Tinsel:

These items are very tempting to kitties, who view them as fun toys to bat around or chew on. However, **NEVER** allow your cat to play with ribbons or tinsel, as they can cause a life-threatening GI obstruction called a "linear foreign body", if swallowed. Throw away all ribbons from presents and do not use string type tinsel to decorate your tree.

#### 2. Holiday Plants:

Poinsettia and Mistletoe plants are poisonous to cats and can cause irritation to the mouth and GI tract if ingested. Some varieties of Mistletoe can even cause cardiovascular problems, liver failure, or even seizures. In addition, Lilies are highly toxic to cats and can lead to acute kidney failure if eaten. Make sure to place any holiday arrangements containing Lilies far out of your kitty's reach, or better yet, use artificial plants.

#### 3. Christmas Tree Hazards:

Christmas tree water may contain fertilizer and can cause stomach upset if ingested. Cover water container tightly to prevent access. Cover all electric cords to prevent curious cats from chewing on them. Glass ornaments and other breakables should be placed high up on the tree, far away from kitty. Hang "soft" or non-breakable ornaments on the lower branches.

#### 4. Candles and Potpourri:

Make sure lit candles are out of your cat's reach to prevent accidental burning. In addition, liquid potpourri can cause severe oral, skin, or ocular damage. Make sure any "simmer pots" or liquid potpourri bottles are far away from kitty.

#### 5. Antifreeze:

Highly toxic to cats, antifreeze ingestion causes acute kidney failure and death. Make sure to clean up any spills or leaks this winter.

#### 6. Out-of-Town Guests:

Remind your guests to keep all medications out of reach. Also, do not allow Holiday Guests to feed your cat "Holiday Food", as dietary indiscretion can lead to vomiting, diarrhea and lethargy. In addition, foods containing onions or garlic may be toxic to your cat.

Remember, the Holidays are not just a stressful time for you, but for your cats, as well. Take time during all the hustle and bustle to spend extra time with your kitties and stick as closely as possible to their routines to keep them happy and comfortable during this Holiday Season.



### Just In Case:

#### ASPCA Poison Control

With the Holidays right around the corner, you might like to take a look at the ASPCA's list of 101 things that can harm your pet. Good information for anytime of the year! Check it out:

<http://www.aspcapetcare.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control>



## CAT OF THE MONTH!

Is your cat the cutest cat that ever lived?

Mister, or Miss, Personality?

Does he have a trait uncommon to cats?

Is she a "fetch kitty"?

Enter your "one and only" in our Cat of the Month Contest!

Next time you are in, fill out one of our forms and drop it in the Cat of the Month

Box... Your kitty might be the lucky winner of a special prize!



**OUR HOURS:**  
Monday through Friday: 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.  
(Appointments with Doctors begin at 8 a.m.)  
Saturday: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. – BY APPOINTMENT  
**SAME DAY URGENT CARE WELCOME**



Please visit our Website for more information about upcoming specials and more feline health information:

[www.BeniciaCatClinic.com](http://www.BeniciaCatClinic.com)

