

# All About Vaccinations

## Vaccine Guidelines and Reactions



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## Core Vaccines

Core vaccines are considered vital to all pets based on risk of exposure, severity of disease, or transmissibility to humans.

- **Rabies Vaccine:** Under §169.29 of the Texas Administrative Code, all dogs and cats in Texas must be vaccinated for rabies by 16 weeks of age by or under the direct supervision of a licensed veterinarian using a vaccine licensed by the USDA for use in these species at or after the minimum age requirement and using the recommended route of administration for the vaccine.
- **For dogs:** DAPP (canine parvovirus, distemper, and canine hepatitis) and rabies are considered core vaccines.
- **For cats:** FVRCP (panleukopenia/feline distemper, feline calicivirus, feline herpesvirus type 1) and rabies are considered core vaccines.

## Vaccination Risks

Immunizations should mildly stimulate the animal's immune system to create protection from specific infectious diseases. This stimulation can create mild symptoms, ranging from soreness at the injection site to fever and allergic reactions. As with any medical procedure, there is a small chance of side effects. In most cases, the risks are much smaller than the risks of disease itself. Most pets show no ill effect from vaccination.

### Mild Reactions

Some of the most common mild side effects after immunization include:

- Redness, mild swelling, and tenderness at the vaccination site
- Decreased activity levels (fatigue)
- Loss of appetite
- Low-grade fever
- Nasal discharge, sneezing, coughing, or other respiratory symptoms, which may occur up to 2-4 days after an intranasal vaccine (vaccine with drops or sprays via the nostrils) is administered.

***if any of these signs last more than 24 hours or if your pet appears extremely uncomfortable, notify your routine veterinarian.***

### Medical Emergencies

Less common but more serious side effects can occur within minutes to hours after vaccination. These reactions are considered to be medical emergencies, and you should seek veterinary care immediately if any of the following occur:

- Collapse or fainting
- Difficulty breathing
- Persistent and severe coughing
- Small, red, raised, itchy bumps over the body (hives)
- Swollen or puffy eyes, muzzle, or face
- Persistent vomiting or diarrhea

## Overview

### Why Vaccinate?

Vaccines help prepare the body's immune system to fight the invasion of disease-causing organisms. Vaccines contain antigens, which look like the disease-causing organism to the immune system but don't actually cause disease. When the vaccine is introduced to the body, the immune system is mildly stimulated. If a pet is ever exposed to the real disease, its immune system is now prepared to recognize and fight it off entirely or reduce the severity of the illness.

**It is advised that puppies and kittens are revaccinated every 2-4 weeks until they are 20 weeks old.**

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