

Vaccines work by stimulating the body's defense mechanisms or immune system to produce antibodies to a particular microorganism or microorganisms such as a virus, bacteria, or other infectious organism. The animal's immune system is then prepared to react to a future infection with that microorganism(s). The reaction will either prevent infection or lessen the severity of infection and promote rapid recovery. Thus, vaccination mimics or simulates the protection or immunity that a pet has once it has recovered from natural infection with a particular infectious agent.

There are many combinations of vaccines available for pets today. Griffith Animal Hospital offers vaccine combinations that our veterinarians deem the most necessary for the diseases in our area.



For dogs, a yearly vaccination visit includes an exam, a Rabies vaccine, DHLPPC vaccine (Canine Distemper), a fecal test, and a heartworm test. A fecal test checks your dog's stool for the presence of internal parasites. A heartworm test checks your dog's blood for the presence of heartworms. **Rabies** vaccinations are required by law in both Indiana and Illinois, and protect pets from deadly Rabies in case of exposure to the virus. **DHLPPC**, commonly called Distemper, is actually a 6-in-1 combination of vaccines combined into one injection. Each component of the vaccine is as follows:

- **Canine Distemper (D)** - a highly contagious, incurable, often fatal, multisystemic viral disease that affects the respiratory, gastrointestinal, and central nervous systems. Distemper is caused by the canine distemper virus.
- **Adenovirus Type 2 (H)** - also known as Infectious Canine Hepatitis, is a viral infection caused by a member of the Adenovirus family that causes inflammation of the liver.
- **Leptospira (L)** - a bacterial disease of dogs and other mammals that primarily affects the liver or kidneys. Ingestion of infected urine or rodent-contaminated garbage is the most common means of transmission, but some forms of the bacteria can penetrate damaged or thin skin, or through contaminated water.
- **Parainfluenza (P)** - a highly contagious respiratory disease that can progress to pneumonia in puppies or chronic bronchitis in older dogs.
- **Parvovirus (P)** - a virus that causes loss of the lining of the intestinal tract, and destroys some blood cell elements. The intestinal damage results in severe dehydration (water loss), electrolyte (sodium and potassium) imbalances, and infection in the bloodstream. It

is an extremely contagious virus and the leading cause of death for puppies under a year old.

- **Coronavirus (C)** - a contagious intestinal infection that usually produces a mild disease. However, it can be severe in young puppies and dogs that are stressed by concurrent infections

We also offer the **Bordetella** (Kennel Cough) vaccine for pets that board, attend training classes and dog parks, or are frequently exposed to other dogs. Our veterinarians also suggest **Lyme** vaccinations for dogs with high risk of exposure to ticks.

For cats, a yearly vaccination visit includes an exam, a Rabies vaccine, FVRCP vaccine (Feline Distemper), and a Leukemia vaccine. **Rabies** vaccinations are required by law in both Indiana and Illinois, and protect pets from deadly Rabies in case of exposure to the virus. **FVRCP**, commonly called Distemper, is actually a 3-in-1 combination of vaccines combined into one injection. Each component of the vaccine is as follows:

- **Feline Rhinotracheitis (FVR)** - an upper respiratory or pulmonary infection of cats caused by feline herpesvirus 1 and causes one-half of the respiratory diseases in cats.
- **Calicivirus (C)** - a virus of the family Caliciviridae that causes disease in cats. It is one of the two important viral causes of respiratory infection in cats.
- **Panleukopenia (P)** - a viral infection affecting cats that is caused by feline parvovirus, a close relative of canine parvovirus (see above). Once contracted, it is highly contagious and can be fatal to the affected cat.

Griffith Animal Hospital offers Leukemia vaccines for cats. **Feline Leukemia** is a long-term virus which compromises a cat's immune system, leaving him more susceptible to other infections. In addition, Leukemia also causes tumors in one third of infected cats. All cats are required to be tested for Leukemia before beginning receiving a Leukemia vaccine.



Puppies and kittens should begin receiving vaccines at 6 – 8 weeks of age to begin building immunities. Both will receive vaccination boosters for three sessions scheduled 3 weeks apart. Fecal tests and deworming, if necessary, will be performed throughout the vaccination booster process to ensure a healthy young pet.

For any questions regarding vaccines or to schedule an appointment, please call us today.