

Mews & News

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RIVERSIDE CAT HOSPITAL



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The Scoop on Vaccines for your Cat

What vaccines does my new kitten need? Do I really have to get my indoor cats vaccinated? Are all these vaccines harmful for my cat? It seems like there are a lot of people asking questions like these recently. With easy access to a wide range of information sources, especially the Internet, many people are becoming confused about this issue. They want what's best for their pets,

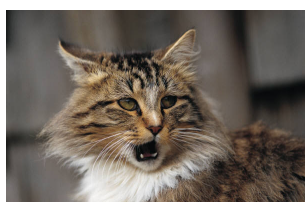
but it can be hard to sift through all the information available and decide just what that is! We'd like to offer you some perspective on this problem, specifically as it relates to feline medicine (especially since that's what we know and love!).

The practice of vaccinating, or immunizing, to prevent disease has been around for a long time. In human medicine, vaccines have been used successfully to eradicate, or nearly eradicate,

devastating diseases, such as smallpox and polio. In veterinary medicine, too, vaccines have been instrumental in greatly reducing the suffering and death of our pets from diseases such as feline leukemia virus, rabies, and canine distemper. But can vaccines make our pets sick, too? Recent evidence links vaccinations to certain autoimmune diseases, and to the development of cancerous tumors.

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You Want Me to Brush My Cat's Teeth???



We are all well-accustomed to the routine of brushing our teeth every day, using dental floss, and taking regular trips to the dentist's office. But how often do we stop to think about proper care for our cat's teeth? How many of us actually brush our cat's teeth or ensure that he or she has regular dental care?

Okay, we'll admit that for most people, being able to brush their cat's teeth may not be a realistic expectation. However, there are other steps that you can take to ensure that your cat's teeth and mouth stay healthy!

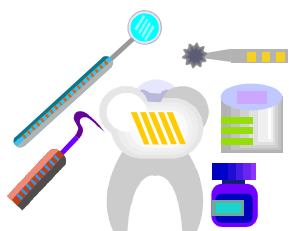
Good dental care for your cats

begins at home. Daily tooth brushing can be very beneficial, but if your cat will not allow his teeth to be brushed, there is still hope. There are specialized dental diets and treats that you can feed your cat to help keep his teeth and gums clean and healthy. We recommend Hill's Prescription Diet t/d. It was the first dental diet developed, and continues to be effective in helping to prevent plaque and tartar buildup. Dr. Lewis feeds this food to her own cats. C.E.T. chews are also great as treats for added benefit. Both the prescription food and C.E.T. treats are only available through veterinarians. Be cau-

tious of over-the-counter foods and treats that advertise as "dental" products. These products are not required to undergo any additional testing to actually prove that they improve dental health. Greenies brand treats are one over-the-counter treat that have been shown to help keep cats' teeth clean. Greenies are one of Izzy's favorite snacks during the day here at the clinic!

A second important step in ensuring that your cat's teeth stay healthy is bringing him or her to the clinic for regular wellness visits. Dr. Lewis will check the health of your cat's

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Check out these resources for more information on feline medicine and vaccines:

www.avma.org/vafstf/
www.aafponline.org
www.vet.cornell.edu/fhc/brochures/vaccbr.html
www.veterinarypartner.com

The Scoop on Vaccines for your Cat, cont.

We share your concerns about these potentially serious complications. However, it is important to understand that vaccines prevent many more animals from becoming sick, in comparison to the very small numbers of pets that develop vaccine-related illnesses.

In acknowledgement of these concerns, our clinic has modeled our vaccination recommendations on those published by the AAFP Feline Vaccine Task Force. These recommendations include a longer vaccination interval for distemper/RCP of 3 years, and a move to using *nonadjuvanted* vaccines. Adjuvants are certain “carrier” molecules that are added to vaccines to help increase the body’s immune response to the vaccines. They have also been found inside of vaccine-associated fibrosarcomas, a particularly aggressive form of cancer associated with feline vaccinations. This has led many researchers to believe that adjuvants may contribute to the formation of these tumors in cats that receive vaccines.

Many people are also concerned that their pet may have a reaction to a vaccine. Serious, life-

threatening anaphylactic reactions can happen following vaccination in cats, but they are exceedingly rare. The more common type of reaction is a less serious hypersensitivity reaction. This typically involves lethargy (lasting from a few hours to two days), vomiting, diarrhea, or redness or swelling of the face. These reactions, while less serious, are still a concern. The third type of vaccine reaction seen in cats is a localized swelling at the site of the injection. These usually develop within 1-2 weeks of the vaccine, and typically recede over 1 week to 2 months. Typically less than 5 cats per year seen at our clinic will develop vaccine reactions. If your cat has, or has had, a vaccine reaction, the veterinarian will determine if it is appropriate to vaccinate him or her again, and what steps may be taken to help prevent another reaction.

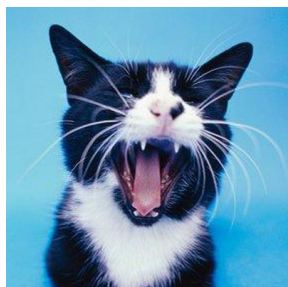
The educated pet owner should also pay attention to the brand of vaccine used as well. Many people assume that there is only 1 brand of each vaccine, or that all brands are equal in safety and efficacy, but this is not the case. Your veterinarian should carefully evaluate all of the products avail-

able, and choose those that will provide the best protection with the least risk of adverse effect. Price should not be a deciding factor, but for many it is! The cost of providing your pet with safe, effective immunity, is far less than the emotional and financial cost of dealing with a preventable disease.

According to current AAFP guidelines, most indoor cats should be kept up-to-date on Rabies and Distemper/RCP vaccines. Cats that go outdoors or have exposure to outdoor cats may also need a Leukemia vaccine. Other available vaccines, such as FIP, FIV, giardia, and ringworm vaccines, are not considered effective, and are not recommended. Again, your veterinarian will evaluate your cat’s lifestyle, age, and health to determine if he or she needs to be vaccinated.

Every cat should have a physical examination every year, or twice yearly for those 10 years or older. The veterinarian will determine at that time if your cat needs any vaccinations. If it has been over a year since your cat’s last vet visit, please call us today!

Dental Care for Cats, cont.



teeth and mouth, point out any problem areas, and discuss ways to address any problems found.

Lastly, getting your cat’s teeth professionally cleaned on a regular basis will go a long way towards preventing serious oral problems. We offer comprehensive dental care to our patients, from pre-anesthetic evaluation and anesthesia moni-

toring, to high-quality dental cleaning, tooth extraction, and oral care. Your cat’s safety and health are our top priority!

Consider that cats are very good at hiding pain, and it is highly unusual for a cat with dental problems to display any outward sign of discomfort. Even cats with broken teeth, bleeding gums, or tooth abscesses, will

continue to eat and groom normally. If your cat’s teeth have not been examined recently, or if the vet has recommended dental work, please call us today!

February is National Pet Dental Health Month. Visit www.PetDental.com for more information.

Ask Izzy

Dear Izzy,

I am 6 months old and really happy at my new home, but I am starting to scratch the carpet and around the house a little.

Do you have any suggestions for my owners on how to remind me not to scratch?

Signed, Snoopy Calico Kitten

Dear Snoopy,

Congratulations on your new home!

I can understand your desire to scratch—it's only natural! Here are some tips to share with your new people.

Ask your new family to provide you with a scratching post. Try to let them know if you prefer carpet, sisal, wood, or some other surface. Then, ask them to rub some catnip on the post and give you treats when they see you using the post. Remind them that the post needs to be kept in a place where you like to scratch. Let them know that cats

who like to scratch the carpet may like a horizontal scratching post better.

Also, please encourage your new owners to try trimming your nails. I don't like having mine trimmed either, but it does help with the scratching! Keep in mind that the vet clinic can be a great resource for helping your new family to work through these problems. Have them give us a call if they need any support!

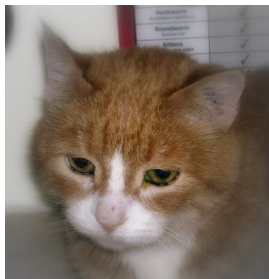
Signed, Izzy



Izzy, our Resident Cat, likes to help out around the clinic by answering questions from our patients and their families. If you have a question for Izzy, you can send it to her via mail, or e-mail from our website, www.RiversideCatHospital.com, and click on the [contact us](#) link.

In Memoriam

In memory of those kitties who have left us in the past 3 months— They give so much and demand so little in return.



*Johnny Anderson
Nemo Dufner
Jade Kahl
Mimi Maillette*

Just this side of heaven is a place called Rainbow Bridge.

When an animal dies that has been especially close to someone here, that pet goes to the Rainbow Bridge.

There are meadows and hills for all of our special friends so they can run and play together. There is plenty of food, water and sunshine, and our friends are warm and comfortable. All the animals who had been ill and old are restored to health and vigor; those who were hurt or maimed are made whole and strong again, just as we remember them in our dreams of days and times gone by. The animals are happy and content, except for one small thing; they each miss someone very special to them, who had to be left behind.

They all run and play together, but the day comes when one suddenly stops and looks into the distance. His bright eyes are intent; his eager body quivers. Suddenly he begins to run from the group, flying over the green grass, his legs carrying him faster and faster.

You have been spotted, and when you and your special friend finally meet, you cling together in joyous reunion, never to be parted again. The happy kisses rain upon your face; your hands again caress the beloved head, and you look once more into the trusting eyes of your pet, so long gone from your life but never absent from your heart.

Then you cross Rainbow Bridge together....

Employee Spotlight

Hallie Corning has been with Riverside Cat Hospital since our opening in September 2006. She and her husband of 1 1/2 years, Phil, live in Lansing with their 2 cats, Hannah and Sabrina, dog Gunther, dove Willow, rat Louie, and bearded dragon Leroy.

She has six previous years of veterinary experience working with all types of animals, from tigers, coatimundis, and wolves, to reptiles, pocket pets, and dogs and cats. In her spare time, Hallie enjoys walking, fishing, photography, knitting, and drawing.



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*CARING FOR YOUR CATS
AS MUCH AS YOU DO.*

Visit us online!

www.RiversideCatHospital.com

The Last Word...

Have you seen our website lately? We have been busy updating and revising, including lots of fun and informative pages and links for you to explore.

From the front page, you can take a virtual tour of our clinic and read about our practice philosophy. At the bottom of the front page, you will find a new feature—our “Website of the Week”. Follow the link to an educational website, or perhaps just a silly cat video!

On the *Pet Library* page, you can browse or search for articles on feline health topics. There are pages with interesting links, and archives of our previous newsletters.

On the *Forms* page, you can submit a new client form, a change of address form, or even a request for a medication refill!

Lastly, be sure to check out the *Other Features* page. There, you will find our pet photo album—see if



you can find your cat’s picture! (If not, let us know, and we will add it). You can also sign our guestbook, or use the “Spread the Word” feature to let your friends and family know about our clinic!

From our website, you can also find contact information to e-mail us anytime with your questions or comments. We try to respond to all inquiries within 24 hours. Visit us online today at www.RiversideCatHospital.com!