



## Mews & News

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Riverside Cat Hospital |



We hope that you find these newsletters informative and entertaining. However, if you do not wish to receive these quarterly mailings, simply click on the "unsubscribe" button at the top of this e-mail. We promise that we will never share your contact information with anyone, and will only use your e-mail address to send you these quarterly newsletters, or to contact you about your pet.

As always, we welcome your feedback. If you have suggestions for how we can improve our newsletter, please call or e-mail us. We'd be happy to hear from you!

### Vaccinating Your Cat

#### Common misconceptions and what you need to know

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. 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 had a vaccine reaction, the veterinarian will determine if it is appropriate to vaccinate him or her

### Fall 2010

#### In this issue:

Vaccines and Your Cat

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In Memoriam

Welcome Alex!

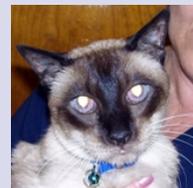
Ask Izzy

The Last Word



#### In Memoriam...

In honor of those pets that have died in the past 3 months...



Kla D.

Abby A.  
Bandit S.  
Beauregard S.  
Bob M.  
Buttercup T.  
Cali H.  
Curly D.  
Daphnis J.  
Frank P.  
GoGo C.  
Imelda B.  
Macy D.  
Murphy C.  
Sprite R.  
Tiger N.  
Zion H.

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 available, 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!

### Ask Izzy



*I would like to use my column this month to say "Thanks" to all of you who have stopped in with good wishes or asked after my health during my recent bout with kidney disease. I want to let everyone know that, while my kidney disease can't be cured, things seem to be stable, and I don't need to get any fluids for the time being (which is really good, since I really don't like getting fluids, and I don't behave very well when I'm getting them). So, hopefully things will remain stable for a while and I won't need any medications or fluids anytime soon.*

*I have a new favorite spot - I like to lie by the back door and stretch out in the sun. I've surprised a couple of delivery men, but I don't have any plans to make a mad dash for the outdoors. I just like to catch some rays, since my regular window behind the front desk doesn't get much direct sunlight.*

*I still enjoy the occasional blade of grass, so if you're stopping in, please feel free to pick me a nice thick blade of grass out by the fence, and I'll be so happy!*

### Izzy

[Send Izzy your question](#) today!

### Goodbye Claudia!

It is with sadness that we say goodbye to our team member Claudia Ottinger. She has been with RiversSide Cat Hospital for over 3 years, and we will miss her. We wish her luck!



Alex Collins-Webb will be joining us this month. She is studying zoology at Michigan State University and wants to become a veterinarian. She enjoys reading, hanging out with her friends, and is trying to learn to cook. She also loves each and every sassy, overfed squirrel on campus.

### The Last Word



Thanks to all who stopped by our Open House in June, held in conjunction with the 2nd annual Celebrate Downtown Okemos Art Walk. We had great weather, and were able to showcase several adoptable kittens from the Ingham County Animal Shelter.

We've been blessed with a very warm and sunny summer, and hopefully the good weather will continue into the fall. Remember to keep plenty of fresh water available for your cats, both indoor and outdoor. As the weather turns cooler in coming months, be sure that any outdoor cats

### Cats and the Law

In one town in Indiana, all black cats are required to wear bells on their collar on Friday the 13th.

It is illegal for a cat to break up a dog fight in Idaho.

In Louisiana, cats are not allowed to chase ducks on city streets.

In Dallas, cats must wear a headlight when out after dark.

It is illegal for cats to drink beer in Natchez, Mississippi.

In Montana, cats must wear bells on their collars to warn birds of their approach.

### Staff Pet Spotlight

#### Willow



ringneck dove who lives with Hallie, along with 2 cats, a dog, a bearded dragon, and several fish. Willow's favorite thing to do is to coo loudly while Hallie is trying to talk on the phone. She also enjoys taking short trips through the air while wearing her custom flight suit!



Are happy with the service you receive at our clinic?

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have a protected area out of the wind with warm bedding.

If you are planning trips over Thanksgiving or Christmas, get your boarding reservations in early, as we do fill up over those holidays!



Until next time,  
*Kerry Lewis, DVM*