



## Kitten Rabies Vaccine Guide

Our recommendation is that any cat, regardless of age or weight, who is to be sterilized, eartipped, and returned outdoors should be administered an initial rabies vaccine.

- There are no rabies vaccines labeled for use in kittens under 12 weeks or 3 months of age.
- While initially licensed by the USDA and labeled by the manufacturer for use in kittens beginning at 8 weeks of age, Purevax Rabies vaccine is now labeled for vaccination of kittens 12 weeks and older.
- Regardless, we encourage veterinarians to vaccinate all cats and kittens against rabies because of the possible protective effect of vaccination, even if this results in extra-label use.
- This recommendation is in line with the widely accepted practice of vaccinating species for which licensed vaccines are not available in an effort to protect people who come in contact with those animals. (Compendium of Animal Rabies Prevention and Control, 2016)
- The National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians states that additional research is needed regarding “the earliest age at which rabies vaccination is effective, (and the) protective effect of maternal antibody.” (Compendium of Animal Rabies Prevention and Control, 2016)
- In order for a veterinarian to issue a rabies certificate, the rabies vaccine must be given according to the product label.
- Kittens under 12 weeks or 3 or 4 months of age (depending on the vaccine) are not eligible for a rabies certificate. Regardless, medical records should be maintained that document the administration of the vaccination.
- For community cat populations, the rabies certificate is not of primary concern, rather, the important thing is to attempt to protect the individual animal, and in so doing, protect human populations by making sure every cat that is outdoors is vaccinated against rabies.
- Each state or jurisdiction has its own rabies control program. It is imperative that veterinarians investigate, understand, and follow the legal requirements for rabies vaccination in the areas in which they practice.
- Whether or not to administer a rabies vaccine is the practice of veterinary medicine, and as such, is entirely at the discretion of the veterinarian.