



## KITTEN VACCINATIONS



A carefully, thought out and followed vaccination programme is one of the most important things you can do for your kitten. A typical vaccination programme will protect your kitten against Feline Enteritis (Panleukopaenia) and Feline Upper Respiratory Disease (Snuffles). Snuffles is caused by two main viruses – rhinotracheitis and calici virus, although other viruses and sometimes bacteria are also involved.

For kittens the recommended programme is an initial vaccination at six to eight weeks of age. The first shot sensitizes the kitten's immune system, and must be followed by boosters at twelve weeks, and a final vaccination at 16 weeks (World Small Animal Veterinary Association recommendations, Jan 2016).

By sixteen weeks of age, after the completion of the course of vaccinations, virtually all the kittens should be able to produce their own antibodies to "street" virus that they might come into contact with, thus be protected from developing those diseases.

If your kitten is older than eight weeks, don't panic. We can start the course at any age, giving the initial sensitizing shot, and following it three to four weeks later, with a booster shot. We consider kittens and cats to be fully protected ten days after they have completed their full course of vaccinations.

To ensure cats remain protected against these diseases throughout their life, they should be given a booster shot each year. Just like people, older cats are more susceptible to many diseases so they shouldn't be forgotten about either.