

Rabies: Why your Dog Needs this Vaccination

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WHY VACCINATE FOR RABIES



The very mention of rabies triggers alarm, and it is accurate to state that the concerns are well founded.

WORLD RABIES DAY: SEPTEMBER 28

Every year, on September 28th, World Rabies Day helps keep people around the world aware that rabies is still a global risk and that someday it will be possible to eliminate rabies. Why not make this the day you check that your pet's rabies vaccine is up to date?

HOW IS RABIES TRANSMITTED?

The rabies virus is shed in the saliva of an infected animal. The virus goes deep into the tissues of the victim through the biting activity of the rabid animal. It spreads through the nervous system and affects the brain. The disease then progresses through three phases:

Prodromal phase: The dog may be apprehensive, nervous, and anxious and may prefer to be alone. He may have a fever and lick the site of a bite. A gentle-natured dog may snap without reason, and a naturally aggressive dog may act quiet and affectionate.

Furious phase: Signs of viciousness, disorientation, and seizures. Death can occur.

Paralytic phase: This phase can follow either one of the first two stages. The animal may salivate and breathe with difficulty. Facial muscles become paralyzed; the jaw drops, and respiratory failure and death usually follow.

Rabies may affect different animals differently. For instance a normally docile animal

may become agitated, while a normally nervous, hyperactive animal may seem "tame".

WHY VACCINATE FOR RABIES?

Vaccines play an essential role in ensuring your dog's health and vitality. Vaccines fortify the immune system against bacterial and viral invaders, making your dog better able to fight off infection and less likely to experience debilitating symptoms should he acquire the disease. When you introduce the killed or modified organisms in a vaccine into your dog, you stimulate an immune response, creating antibodies that protect him - for a period of time - against those organisms. His immune system eventually "remembers" this response by creating memory cells, and then employs these cells if the disease-causing organism enters his body. Memory cells resulting from vaccinations help your dog's body respond to diseases much faster and more broadly. Multiple vaccinations are often required to ensure a consistently strong response. The schedule for when rabies vaccines should be given varies by locality, so contact your veterinarian or Vetco for your particular situation.

WHERE CAN YOUR PET GET VACCINATED?

If your pet is due for a rabies vaccination, an affordable, convenient solution is to go to a Vetco Clinic near you. At Vetco, with no appointment needed, and no exam fee, you can get a rabies vaccination and certificate for your pet at an affordable price. Vetco is available in over 30 states and has about 1,400 weekend and evening clinics at Petco stores across the nation. Find your nearest [Vetco](#) easily.

A FEW FACTS ON RABIES

- Rabies affects mammals only, including terrestrial carnivores, humans, or bats.
- Globally, rabies is carried by dogs; regionally, rabies is carried by skunks, raccoons, foxes, coyotes, or bats and each variant affects each species differently.
- The different variants of rabies affect each mammal differently. Each variant is named for the species that it is typically found in. For example, the raccoon variant is usually found in raccoons, but other species, such as dogs, may become infected with that variant as well as other variants.
- Bats do not interact with the public generally. Bats rarely interact with people and the three situations to watch out for (and where there is a risk of bite) include:
 - Any physical contact with a bat (not just flying around)
 - A bat in a room with an unattended child
 - A bat in your bedroom when you wake up
- In August, when baby bats leave the colony and make their own home, is a time when humans should be more aware of bat contact.
- There is no treatment for a dog that contracts the infection, and instances of unvaccinated dogs surviving rabies are extremely rare.
- If a dog that is up-to-date on rabies vaccinations is bitten or scratched by an

animal in the wild, it is considered "exposed to rabies," is revaccinated, and placed under observation for a number of weeks.

- If a non-vaccinated dog is exposed to rabies, euthanizing is the norm, although, in some cases, the dog may be placed in strict isolation for a number of months.
- The only way to achieve a definite diagnosis is to examine brain tissue.
- Each locality has different rabies rules regarding rabies exposure, treatment, and quarantine. Please speak to your local board of health for details.

PLAY IT SAFE

Rabies is highly preventable if you follow the recommended vaccine schedules and keep your pet away from wild animals. The laws pertaining to rabies vaccinations and biting dogs vary region to region. Your veterinarian is able to guide and assist you in this matter, giving your pet the protection he needs and you peace of mind. The rabies vaccine is a "killed" rabies virus, so there is no chance your dog will contract rabies from the vaccine. It is an effective way to protect your dog from this deadly disease.