

Cat vaccines update 2023

There is a widespread shortage of feline vaccines in the United Kingdom and Ireland. This is affecting Feline Leukaemia (FeLV) vaccines in particular. There is a need for vets to prioritise vaccinations for cats considered at greatest risk of FeLV based on their age, lifestyle and environment.

Based on expert panel guidance^{1,2,3}, high-risk cat groups include:

- Cats requiring a primary vaccination course
- Cats requiring their 1st annual booster

Therefore, we will be giving priority to these cats until FeLV vaccine supplies return. Once supplies return we will ensure all other cats receive a FeLV vaccine as soon as possible. We are hoping that this will be Spring 2024.

FeLV vaccination has been shown to provide protection for a number of years following initial course and first annual booster. We currently revaccinate every 3 years according to WSAVA protocols and manufacturer data sheet protocols. Older cats that have previously been vaccinated for FeLV are at much lower risk for FeLV (even if not subsequently vaccinated). Older cats are much less likely to develop progressive disease and so that is why primary vaccination and first boosters are being prioritised.

Most catteries require that only the core flu and enteritis vaccines are given and as there is no shortage of these vaccines we will be able to give these. However, it is imperative that you check with your cattery in advance to ensure this meets their requirements.

Please see <https://todaysveterinarypractice.com/preventive-medicine/feline-leukemia-virus-vaccination/> for some information regarding FeLV.

References: 1. Scherk, et al (2013). 2013 AAEP Feline Vaccination Advisory Panel Report. *Journal of Feline Medicine and Surgery*, 15(9), 785–808. 2. Hosie, et al. & European Advisory Board on Cat Diseases (2015). Matrix vaccination guidelines: 2015 ABCD recommendations for indoor/outdoor cats, rescue shelter cats and breeding catteries. *Journal of Feline Medicine and Surgery*, 17(7), 583–587. 3. Day, et al, & Vaccination Guidelines Group (VGG) of the World Small Animal Veterinary Association (WSAVA) (2016). WSAVA Guidelines for the vaccination of dogs and cats. *The Journal of Small Animal Practice*, 57(1), E1–E45.