

# **Rabies Vaccination**

## **Is rabies vaccination mandatory in California?**

Yes. Rabies vaccination in dogs is mandatory. Some cities in LAC have enacted rabies vaccination requirements for cats. VPH recommends that all dogs and cats, indoor and outdoor, are vaccinated for rabies and kept up to date.

## **How do I know if a dog is exempt from a rabies vaccination?**

VPH is the department that handles rabies vaccination exemptions for dogs only. If a dog is exempt from getting a rabies vaccination, we will send approved paperwork to the dog's veterinarian that will be passed on to the dog owner. If the owner or veterinarian does not have the approved paperwork from us, the dog is not exempt from the vaccination and must comply with local licensing laws. Call VPH if you want to check on the status of an exemption.

## **Should I booster the rabies vaccine of all animals under rabies quarantine?**

Animals that bite humans should be minimally handled during quarantine and should only be vaccinated for rabies AFTER the quarantine has passed.

Animals that are bitten by wild mammals should be boosted as soon as possible after the incident, even if they were up to date with the rabies vaccine. Start the Texas protocol (0, 3, 8 week post-bite rabies boosters) for animals that have never had a rabies vaccine before that are bitten by wildlife.

## **If there hasn't been a local dog or cat with rabies in LA County since the 1960s, then why do we have to vaccinate dogs and cats for rabies?**

The risk of rabies in local dogs and cats is low in LA County, however there are several ways that rabies can still be transmitted to our pets. Foreign dogs/pets being imported from other countries can bring rabies into our communities and dogs and cats can interact with bats and wildlife that carry rabies. If we stop

vaccinating animals against rabies, we are not protecting them from it, and we are increasing their risk of becoming rabid and exposing us to the disease as well.

### **My dog/cat does not go outside, he stays strictly indoors, why do I have to keep him up to date with the rabies vaccine?**

In California, rabies vaccination in dogs is mandatory. Also, even indoor dogs and cats can have exposure to bats. Rabid bats are consistently found inside houses and workplaces every year.

### **What is the purpose of the rabies vaccine?**

Every time you give a rabies vaccine to a pet, you are strengthening their own immunity and defenses against contracting rabies from another animal. Rabies is common in other parts of the world because there is no animal control or mandatory rabies vaccination for pets. Unprotected pets in these areas are running stray, biting other animals and biting humans, passing on the disease.

### **Can I accept foreign rabies vaccination certificates for licensing?**

Refer to the CDPH Compendium of U.S. Licensed Animal Rabies Vaccines in this manual to see a list of approved rabies vaccinations. Only rabies vaccines licensed by USDA and approved by the California Department of Public Health can be used in the California Rabies Control Program. If the rabies vaccine on the certificate is not approved, then the animal should be immediately re-vaccinated with a U.S. licensed rabies vaccine. If you are unsure, call VPH, or consider re-boosting the animal.

### **What is the minimum age to vaccinate dogs and cats for rabies?**

The minimum age for rabies vaccination in dogs and cats changed from 4 months to 3 months in January 2014.