

## **To vaccinate or not to vaccinate.....**

We are increasingly faced with the issue whether or not cats should be vaccinated annually. The answer to this question depends on the animal's life and care conditions. A pet that's getting healthy nutrition, looks healthy, and is obviously feeling fit will have an appropriate resistance against all sorts of diseases - and will be less prone to vaccination reactions. It's better not to vaccinate any pets that are not in optimum health conditions, as a vaccination will have a significant impact on the body, which may worsen any dormant problems.

It is recommended not to vaccinate kittens at too young an age. Vaccinations before the age of 12 weeks can only be harmful, as their immune system hasn't sufficiently developed yet, thus increasing the chance the vaccination will be harmful to the kitten and decreasing the chance the vaccination will catch on. In fact our pets' immune system is only fully developed at the age of around one year, but as most cats come in contact with all sorts of infections before that age -in particular when they leave the nest and find themselves in a another environment- it would be unwise to wait until that time.

Pet owners who do wish to have their animal vaccinated are advised to have this done at the age of 12 weeks, and again at the age of one year. Most vaccinations will work for at least 5 years, and possibly even life-long. In particular the feline parvovirus vaccination ensures a life-long immunity after two vaccinations.

For a healthy cat, cat flu doesn't need to be an insurmountable problem, only in case of very stressful conditions the disease is hard to treat. However, for catteries it can be a problem because carriers continuously keep spreading the disease. A remarkable fact is that in cats that have been vaccinated against cat flu but get infected anyway, the disease often gets chronic.

Cocktail vaccinations against multiple diseases often are harder to overcome for the body than separate vaccinations with several weeks' intervals.

A rabies vaccination is compulsory for all animals that are taken abroad; and some other vaccinations are compulsory for pets going to kennels.

### **Disadvantages**

Despite the fact that in the past it was often stated that vaccinations were innocent, it now appears that vaccinations do cause more problems than we care for. Not very much research has been done yet but gradually things are getting clear.

Frequently apparently healthy cats that were vaccinated are coming back within three weeks with all sorts of medical problems. Sometimes it's diarrhoea containing blood; sometimes it's autoimmune diseases, painful muscles, fever or other, and often vague complaints. And these are visible problems. But there also are internal problems which may cause long-term health problems.

Research has demonstrated that an increased number of anti-bodies against thyroid tissue may be present in the blood until 40 days after a vaccination. This does not have to be case in all animals, but when this is happening more often, and longer, it may lead to a decreased thyroid function, or even a completely malfunctioning thyroid. And if this can happen to the thyroid, it could probably also happen to other organs. So, this leads to the suspicion that autoimmune diseases could probably be triggered by vaccinations.

In AIHA (Auto-Immune Hemolytic Anemia) the causal link with the vaccination has already been ascertained.

In particular the rabies vaccination and the leucosis vaccination can cause highly aggressive tumours in cats at the place of the vaccination. This happens in approx. 1 out of 1,000 cats, and is caused by one of the auxiliary agents in the vaccination agent.

### **An alternative**

An alternative for vaccinations is the use of nosodes. This means a homeopathic dilution of the disease is made, which can then be given according to a determined prescription. And it also ensures protection against diseases. Research in Brazil recently revealed that the meningococcal nosode in humans created a 90% protection, which is comparable with the protection provided by a vaccination.

It would be an option to give kittens the diseases nosodes until they have reached the age they can appropriately process a vaccination (1 year), and then give the various vaccinations with several weeks intervals. After each vaccination a vaccination nosode can then be given to neutralize any adverse vaccination effects.

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