

HEALTH & SAFETY

Vaccines for Kittens and Community Cats: A Plain-Language Schedule

The core vaccines, when kittens get them, and what New York law requires for rabies. Your veterinarian sets the final schedule.

By Catt County Cat Nippers • Reviewed October 15, 2026 • 1 min read • 3 cited sources

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The core vaccines

- FVRCP protects against three viruses: feline herpesvirus (viral rhinotracheitis), calicivirus and panleukopenia (feline distemper).
- Rabies: required by New York law for cats.
- FeLV (feline leukemia): recommended for kittens and for cats that go outdoors or live with other cats, after a negative test.

A typical kitten schedule

Kittens need a series because antibodies from their mother can block a single shot. A common pattern under the AAHA/AAFP guidelines is:

- 6–8 weeks: FVRCP #1
- Every 3–4 weeks: another FVRCP, until the kitten is about 16–20 weeks old. The dose at or after 16 weeks matters most.
- About 12–16 weeks: rabies, as the vaccine label and state law allow.
- One year after the kitten series: FVRCP and rabies boosters, then as your veterinarian advises.

New York rabies law

New York Public Health Law §2141 requires every cat to have its first rabies vaccination no later than four months of age, followed by a second within one year.

Community cats in TNR

Feral cats usually cannot be handled for boosters, so clinics vaccinate them while they are under anesthesia for spay/neuter surgery. Rabies vaccination is part of every surgery we fund.

This is a general schedule, not medical advice. Your veterinarian decides which vaccines each cat needs and when.

Sources

1. New York Public Health Law §2141 (NY Senate)
<https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/laws/PBH/2141>
2. UC Davis Veterinary Medicine — Vaccination Guidelines for Dogs and Cats
<https://healthtopics.vetmed.ucdavis.edu/health-topics/feline/vaccination-guidelines-dogs-and-cats>
3. Cat Fanciers' Association — AAHA/AAFP Feline Vaccination Guide
<https://cfa.org/cat-talk/aaha-aafp-feline-vaccination-guide-for-cats/>