HEALTH & SAFETY

Kitten Vaccine Schedule: Which Shots, and When

The core vaccines, when kittens get them, the boosters that follow, and what New York law requires for rabies, from the 2020 AAHA/FelineVMA guidelines. Your veterinarian sets the final schedule.

By Catt County Cat Nippers • Reviewed October 28, 2026 • 5 min read • 5 cited sources

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The short answer

Kittens get their first FVRCP vaccine at 6–8 weeks of age, then another dose every 3–4 weeks until the kitten is about 16–20 weeks old. The dose at or after 16 weeks matters most. Rabies follows at about 12–16 weeks, as the vaccine label allows, and New York law requires it by 4 months of age.

The 2020 AAHA/FelineVMA Feline Vaccination Guidelines also count the feline leukemia (FeLV) vaccine as core for every kitten. Boosters follow between 6 months and a year later, then every 1 to 3 years depending on the vaccine and the cat's risk.

AT A GLANCE

- Kittens need a series because antibodies from their mother can block a single shot.
- About a year later: a rabies booster within one year of the first dose, as New York law requires, and an FeLV booster 12 months after the last kitten dose.
- Feral cats usually cannot be handled for boosters, so clinics vaccinate them while they are under anesthesia for spay/neuter surgery.

A typical schedule

KITTEN AND CAT VACCINES BY AGE

Age	Vaccine	Notes
6–8 weeks	FVRCP, first dose	No earlier than 6 weeks
Every 3–4 weeks	FVRCP, until about 16–20 weeks	The dose at or after 16 weeks matters most
From 8 weeks	FeLV: 2 doses, 3–4 weeks apart	After a negative FeLV test
12–16 weeks	Rabies	As the label allows; New York requires it by 4 months
6 months	FVRCP booster	The guidelines suggest 6 months rather than 1 year
About 1 year	Rabies and FeLV boosters	Rabies within 1 year of the first dose, by New York law
Adult cats	FVRCP every 3 years; rabies every 1 or 3 years; FeLV yearly for cats at risk	By the vaccine label, the law and your vet

From the 2020 AAHA/FelineVMA Feline Vaccination Guidelines and New York Public Health Law §2141. A general schedule, not medical advice.

The core vaccines

The 2020 AAHA/FelineVMA Feline Vaccination Guidelines, written by a task force of feline vets, call these vaccines core: every cat should have them unless its vet advises otherwise.

- 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): core for kittens and cats under 1 year old, which are the most susceptible. After that, it is for cats that may meet FeLV-positive cats or cats of unknown status, indoors or outdoors. Cats are tested before the first dose.

> **Other vaccines, such as Chlamydia felis and Bordetella, are optional. Your vet may suggest them for particular situations.**

This quick sheet is the start of the guide. Still to read: Why kittens need a series, Boosters and adult cats, New York rabies law and 3 more sections, plus the Cat Health & Sitter Planner. Read it all free when you join our pet health emails at cattcountycatnippers.org/articles/feline-vaccination-schedule-preventive-care-guide

Sources

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