



## WHAT IS RABIES?

Rabies is a dangerous virus that infects animals and humans worldwide. The virus is generally fatal in all species, and any warm-blooded animal can become infected. Cats are the number one domestic animal carrier of rabies in the United States. A bite from a wild animal is typically how a cat gets the virus. The virus is present in the saliva of rabid cats, and people have developed rabies after being bitten by a rabid cat. The virus can be in the body for weeks or months before signs develop. Reported cases in domestic cats have outnumbered those in dogs in the United States in every year since 1990. Luckily, the rabies vaccine can protect your cat from this deadly disease.

# RABIES IN CATS

## VACCINATION

The rabies vaccine is considered a core vaccine in cats. Rabies vaccination of cats is required in many states across the nation, due to the deadly characteristics of the virus and the risk to human

populations. In states and municipalities where feline rabies vaccination is required, veterinarians must follow applicable statutes. The American Association of Feline Practitioners (AAFP) recommends the following vaccine schedule:

- Kittens receive a single dose as early as 8 or 12 weeks of age, depending on the product label.
- Administer two doses, 12 months apart for adults receiving the vaccine for the first time, or for kittens older than 16 weeks of age at the time of initial vaccination.
- A booster is required annually or every three years, depending on the product label and state or local ordinance.

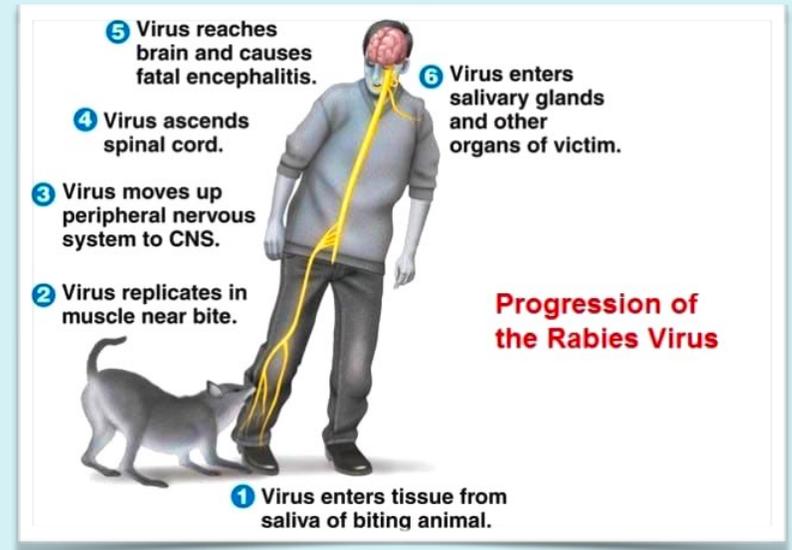


## DIAGNOSIS OF RABIES

If you suspect your cat has rabies, call your veterinarian immediately. If it is safe to do so, cage, or otherwise subdue your cat, and take it to a veterinarian to be quarantined. If your pet is behaving viciously, or is trying to attack, and you feel you are at risk of being bitten or scratched, you must contact animal control to catch your cat for you.

Your veterinarian will keep your cat quarantined in a locked cage for 10 days. This is the only acceptable method for confirming suspected rabies infection. Rabies is diagnosed by testing fluids of the brain, skin, saliva and urine of an animal, not its blood serum. Diagnosis in the U.S. is done using a post-mortem direct fluorescence antibody test performed by a state-approved laboratory for rabies diagnosis. Your veterinarian will collect fluid samples if your cat dies while in quarantine, or if it begins showing progressive signs of rabies; in which case, your veterinarian will opt to euthanize the cat for testing.

A test to determine antibody levels, or “vaccine titers”, is available for rabies. Though not 100 percent indicative of a pet’s overall state of immunity against rabies, this test is sometimes used for regulatory purposes, such as when traveling to certain states or countries.



## SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS?

- Sudden and severe behavioral changes
- Unexplained paralysis
- Loss of appetite
- Nervousness
- Constant irritability
- Uncharacteristic aggressiveness or shyness
- Fever

