

POLICIES AND GUIDELINES FOR ANIMAL RABIES VACCINATION

RABIES VACCINE DURATION OF IMMUNITY: Policy for State/Municipal-Sponsored Rabies Vaccination Clinics and Guidelines for Veterinarians

One Year Duration of Immunity

Dogs and cats which are receiving their first vaccination, or those with an unknown rabies vaccination history, should be given a one-year duration of immunity on their rabies certificate.

Three Year Duration of Immunity

Both dogs and cats that have received one or more rabies vaccinations in the past should receive a three-year duration of immunity on their rabies certificate (with use of a 3-year vaccine).

BOOSTERING DOGS AND CATS WITH LAPSES IN THEIR RABIES VACCINATION SCHEDULE

All dogs and cats that have received at least one vaccination in their life should receive a three-year duration of immunity on booster (assuming use of a 3-year vaccine), even if they may be several years overdue for the booster.

RABIES CERTIFICATES

The veterinarian administering the vaccine should ensure that all rabies certificates are completely and accurately filled out. The veterinarian must sign each certificate and include his/her address and telephone number.

ADVICE TO OWNERS OF DOGS AND CATS NEWLY VACCINATED OR THOSE TOO YOUNG FOR VACCINATION

Dogs and cats that are under vaccination age, or those which have received an initial vaccination less than 30 days previously, are not considered protected against rabies if exposed. Veterinarians should advise the owners of these animals as to this fact, and strongly recommend that these animals not be left outdoors unattended. Situations have arisen where pet owners have left unvaccinated or newly vaccinated pets outside unattended, where they have sustained exposures to known or suspect rabid animals, resulting in euthanasia or six-month confinement of the pet. Veterinarians can help to prevent heartbreaking situations such as these, which often involve puppies and kittens, by educating their clients as to this danger.

**Veterinary Public Health
Infectious And Zoonotic Diseases Program
New Jersey Department Of Health and Senior Services**