

“Non-Core” Feline Vaccinations (updated Jan 2011)

Non-core vaccines are not required in all pets. These may also be considered as “optional”. They are strongly recommended for some patients. For others, it is strongly recommended that they **not** be given.

The American Association of Feline Practitioners (AAFP) is a group of veterinarians who specialize in treating cats. Together with the Academy of Feline Medicine (AFM) they have established guidelines for vaccinating our feline friends. The doctors at Baker Animal Hospital work very hard to follow these guidelines.

Non-core vaccines require tailoring to your cat’s specific needs:

Cats that go outdoors at all, even for 5-10 minutes on the back deck, should be vaccinated for feline leukemia (FeLV) and feline AIDS (FIV). These deadly viruses are spread through saliva and can easily be transmitted by sneezing, sharing food or water bowls, grooming each other, or fighting.

Cats that are indoor only are not recommended to be vaccinated for FeLV or FIV, unless they live with other cats that **do** have outdoor privileges.

According to the AAFP guidelines mentioned above, vaccinations for FeLV should not be given until a kitten is at least 8 weeks old. Since FeLV must be boosted in 2-4 weeks, a likely vaccine schedule for a young kitten that will go indoor and outdoors would be as follows:

“Non-Core” Kitten Vaccination Schedule

8 weeks	11 weeks	14 weeks	1 year after last kitten vaccinations
RCP ₁	RCP ₂	RCP ₃	RCP _A
		Rabies ₁	Rabies ₃
	FeLV ₁	FeLV ₂	FeLV _A

FeLV – Feline Leukemia Virus is a highly contagious virus of cats, and is spread in any manner by which saliva is spread. The three major symptoms of feline leukemia are anemia, immune suppression, and cancer. Anemia may cause a cat to act depressed, have decreased activity levels, or have pale gums. Immune suppression weakens a cat’s ability to fight even simple infections. Cancer can occur in one location, or throughout the body. This virus is highly fatal, and it is recommended that any cat that goes outdoors be vaccinated for FeLV.