



The Importance of Vaccinating Your Companion Animal

Vaccines help protect our companion animals against infectious diseases caused by certain viruses or bacteria.

Vaccines stimulate the immune system to help the body fight or destroy the virus or bacteria that is trying to attack the body. If that same infection tries to attack the body again, a vaccinated animal's immune system will recognize that virus or bacteria and fight it off or be immune to it because of the vaccine.

It is important to remember that it is easier to prevent an illness by already being vaccinated because these vaccines have a very high level of immunity against certain illnesses that attack our companion animals. Vaccines help your companion animal have immunity against the illnesses that could otherwise end their life.

Parvovirus and distemper (feline panleukopenia virus or FPV for cats) vaccines can save the life of your dog or cat. These diseases are highly contagious and can be deadly. Even if dogs and cats survive these illnesses, they are often left with long-term health issues. Vaccines for upper respiratory illnesses will not completely protect your dog or cat from getting an URI. However, if your animal does get an URI, a vaccine will decrease severity of the illness so that symptoms can be more easily managed.

Consult a veterinarian to get a list of known and safe vaccines that are needed and available for your animals. The rabies vaccine is mandatory by federal law in the United States for all dogs older than four months of age. Low-cost vaccine clinics may be available in your community.