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**JACKSONVILLE** FEBRUARY 2008 | VOLUME 2, ISSUE 1

# Jetsetter

The Official Information and Visitor's Guide for the Jacksonville Aviation Authority  
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## Inside This Issue

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# Good Tips #1

from JACKSONVILLE JETSETTER



## Vacations and your pet

### What are the most common diseases prevented by vaccinations?

Careful planning on your pet's behalf will help make things go even more smoothly.

### What are vaccines?

Vaccines are a form of medicine that contain viruses and bacteria which normally cause disease. However, they have been chemically altered so that they cannot make your dog or cat ill. When your pet is injected with a vaccine, his immune system produces special substances called antibodies. After vaccination, when your pet is exposed to a live virus or bacteria, his immune system will already have antibodies present to attack and destroy the invaders, and thus prevent disease. Although the antibodies will defend your pet against disease into the near future, they will eventually decline and as a result, boosters may be needed. Now, there are blood tests, called titers, which can be run to see if your adult pet really needs a booster shot. Puppies and kittens need vaccination every 2 to 3 weeks until their immune systems can protect them. See the sections below for a more detailed explanation of puppy and kitty boosters. Remember that vaccines are preventative- they need to be given before the pet is exposed to a disease.

Once your pet has completed its initial vaccination series, vaccination will be recommended at intervals of 1 to 3 years to maintain immunity. Different intervals for revaccination are recommended depending on the disease, which vaccine brand was used, and the pet's living conditions and lifestyle. You should discuss vaccination intervals including three year vaccinations with your pet's veterinarian to determine the proper strategy for your pet. Not every pet should get every vaccine. While there are some standard recommendations, the current trend in immunology is to tailor the types of vaccines and the frequency at which they are given to the individual pet. The most important thing you can do as a pet owner is to understand how vaccinations work and to know something about the diseases we are protecting against. Explain your pet's lifestyle to your veterinarian, and he or she will make the best recommendations possible for your pet.

#### RABIES (DOGS AND CATS)

All warm-blooded animals, including humans, can become infected with the rabies virus. The virus attacks the nervous system and causes either "dumb" Rabies, where the animal drools excessively or avoid physical contact, or "furious" Rabies, where the animal becomes unnaturally aggressive. Most Rabies exists in wild animals, especially raccoons, skunks, foxes, and bats. Dogs and cats acquire the disease from saliva in the bite of an infected animal. There is no cure for rabies and no test for it that can be performed on a live animal. Proper vaccination is your pets' only protection. Law in both Clay and Duval counties require an initial one-year vaccination of both dogs and cats for Rabies, followed by three-year vaccinations.

#### DISTEMPER (DOGS)

This is one of the most important diseases affecting dogs. It is very widespread and up to 75% of unvaccinated dogs can develop the disease, especially puppies. The most common signs include fever, diarrhea, discharge from the nose and eye, and muscle twitches that can progress to seizures and death.

#### PARAINFLUENZA VIRUS (DOGS)

Canine parainfluenza is a very contagious respiratory disease caused by a virus in the air. In serious cases, pneumonia may develop and it could be fatal.

#### PARVOVIRUS (DOGS)

Most dog owners have heard of Parvo. This disease first appeared in 1978. Parvo is one of the most dangerous and fatal diseases threatening dogs today. This disease is transmitted through feces and vomit from an infected dog. This virus is very contagious and can live in the environment for long periods of time. Your dog does not have to be in contact with any other puppies or even go out of your own yard to catch it. You can track it on your feet! Mortality (death) rates approach 20%, and puppies that survive are capable of spreading the disease for up to 30 days in their feces. The most common signs are not eating, vomiting, and bloody diarrhea in a young dog. In one form of the disease the heart muscle may be affected. The death rate is very high in unvaccinated puppies under six months of age.

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#### 'KENNEL COUGH' (BORDETELLA) (DOGS)

Kennel cough is highly contagious and is caused by a variety of viruses and bacteria. Dogs are most at risk while at a kennel, pet shop, grooming facility, or anyplace they are exposed to other dogs. We recommend every pet be vaccinated for kennel cough even if they do not routinely have exposure to other dogs, because many dogs have become infected after an unplanned boarding or hospital stay. The disease is characterized by a persistent hacking cough that can last anywhere from 2 to 8 weeks. Fortunately, the available vaccines prevent most of the viruses and bacteria that cause kennel cough.

#### LYME DISEASE (DOGS THAT TRAVEL OUTSIDE OF FLORIDA)

Lyme disease is transmitted by ticks and has been mostly associated with fever and joint problems in dogs. The tick that transmits Lyme disease currently does not live in Florida, and cases reported in dogs in Florida have mainly been associated with travel to areas where the tick is found, primarily the Northeastern and Mid Atlantic United States. For that reason, we do not recommend that your dog be routinely vaccinated against Lyme disease. If you anticipate traveling with your pet in the next year, please ask your veterinarian if your pet should be vaccinated for Lyme disease.

#### FELINE DISTEMPER (CATS)

Feline distemper is more similar to Parvo in dogs than it is to distemper in dogs. Cats with this disease run a high fever, lose their appetite, and have vomiting and bloody stool. Mortality (death) rate is fairly high. Usually young cats are affected.

#### FELINE LEUKEMIA (FELV) (CATS)

Feline leukemia is a disease that is somewhat similar to the AIDS virus in people in that it attacks the immune system. Affected cats have higher rates of certain types of cancer, may develop true "leukemia" or cancer of the bone marrow, or may suffer from serious infection due to lack of a functioning immune system. A mother cat with leukemia may pass it on to

her unborn kittens. Spread between cats is by direct cat to cat contact in a social setting, such as fighting or mating, sharing water bowls, and grooming each other. All new cats or kittens should be tested for this disease, and cats that are in a high-risk group (cats that go outdoors or live in a household with more than 3 cats) should be vaccinated. The vaccine is usually considered optional for cats living 100% indoors in a household with less than 3 cats.

#### FELINE IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS (FIV/FELINE AIDS) (CATS)

closely related to HIV in people. It is not the same virus and cannot be transferred to people. Like HIV, FIV destroys the immune system, leaving its victim at risk for serious infections and cancer. This disease is most common in outdoor, unneutered male cats. It is spread like feline leukemia by direct contact, but it is a little harder to catch, requiring exchange of body fluids like fighting, biting, or mating. Although there is currently a vaccine available for FIV, it has significant drawbacks compared to the benefits. If you have an outdoor cat and have questions about this disease, you should contact your cat's regular veterinarian to discuss testing and the vaccine.

#### FELINE INFECTIOUS PERITONITIS (FIP) (CATS)

FIP is a complicated disease that is usually seen in young cats, many of which come from large catteries or breeding facilities. It carries a high rate of death but is not generally highly contagious. There is a vaccine available for FIP, but we do not recommend its use at this time due to the very low risk to adult cats.

#### UPPER RESPIRATORY DISEASE (CATS)

There are several viruses capable of causing upper respiratory disease in cats. These diseases look very much like the "common cold" or the "flu" in people. Vaccination for these diseases is included with the vaccination for distemper in cats.



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Pet Paradise was formed in 2002 in St. Augustine and currently has four other locations in Florida – Jacksonville Airport, University Boulevard & I-95, Ormond Beach and Palm Coast – as well as a location at the New Orleans airport. Planned openings in 2008 include Tallahassee, Gainesville, Sanford and Houston Bush International Airport.

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