

# When can my cat be vaccinated?

The significant increase in cat ownership over the last year has meant that supply of certain vaccines has been unable to meet demand. Veterinary practices are currently having to prioritise patients based on risk and need, and within the constraints of the supply limits.

The veterinary profession is experienced in managing short-term supply issues in veterinary medicines and will be prioritising those animals most at risk, based on factors including age, lifestyle, and local disease incidence.

In practice, this means that some owners may need to wait before allowing their new cats outside and may have to wait a bit longer for boosters.

It's likely this disruption will continue until at least the end of the year. Practices are working hard to protect the pet population and we're asking cat owners to please respect your vet's clinical advice.

To preserve the supply of vaccines, your vet will do a risk-benefit analysis before every vaccination and will only vaccinate your pet if there is a real and current risk to animal health and welfare. If there is not, your vet will suggest delaying vaccination until supplies are replenished.

## Are there risks if I don't vaccinate my cat?

In the long term, vaccinations are essential to prevent infectious disease outbreaks in cats. However, many vaccinations can be safely delayed for a short period.

To preserve the supply of vaccinations, it is better to delay vaccination for many cats.

Please be assured that most previously vaccinated cats are at low risk of becoming sick from the disease they are being vaccinated against for short periods of time after their booster becomes due.

## What should I do if my cat is due to be vaccinated?

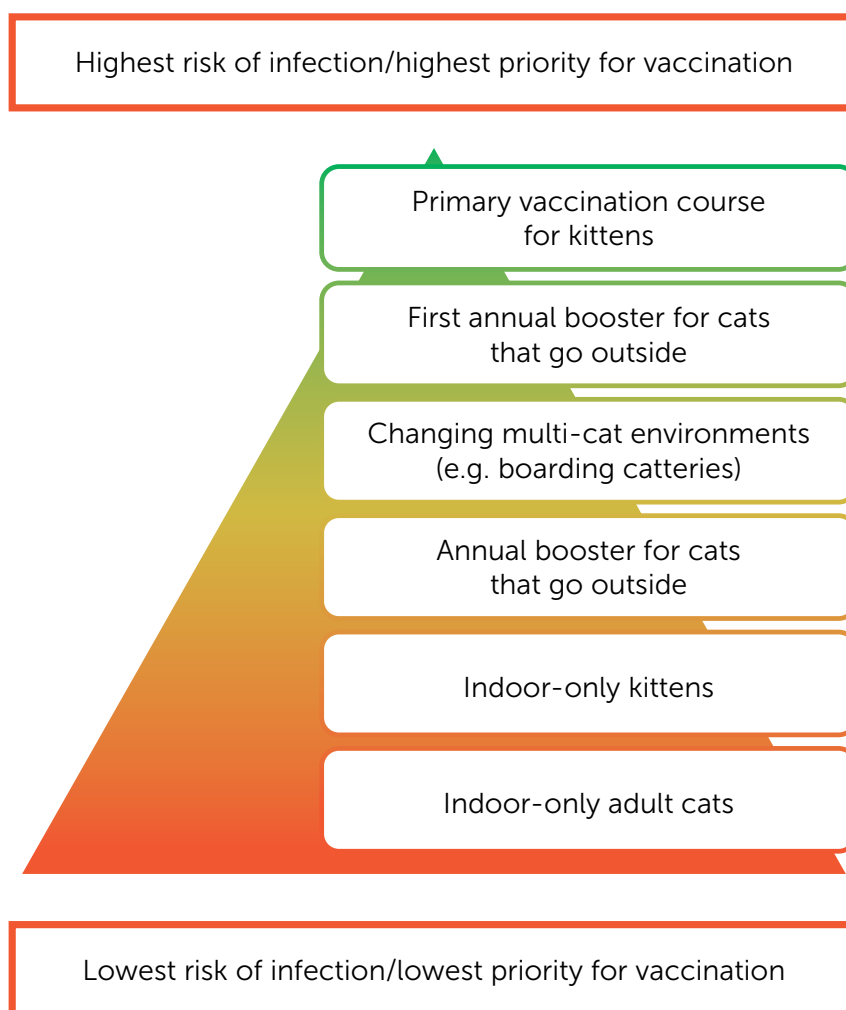
1. Contact your veterinary practice in the usual way. Please remember there may be a delay in answering any non-urgent queries as veterinary practices are very busy at the moment.
2. If you have changed practice since your cat's last vaccination please have all relevant information to hand to answer any questions.
3. Make your vet aware if you have COVID-19, or live in a household where there is a positive or suspected case of COVID-19.
4. Please respect your vet's professional judgement. They have a responsibility to preserve vaccines for the most vulnerable cases.

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## How will my vet decide if my cat needs to be vaccinated? What will happen?

1. Your vet will make a decision based on your cat's individual circumstances and taking into consideration a number of risk-factors, including:
  - Your cat's age
  - Your cat's vaccination history.
  - Incidence of infectious disease in your local area.
  - The number and species of other pets in your household.
  - Your cat's lifestyle. (eg kittens who live with other older cats are at higher risk of infections such as "cat-flu" compared to adult cats living alone)
2. Your vet may suggest you delay your cat's vaccination if your cat is considered to be at low-risk at the moment. Adult booster vaccines can be safely delayed for most cats for three months (unless your vet advises a high-risk situation).

## Prioritisation of the need for vaccination of cats



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## What can I do to help lower the risk to my cat during the vaccine shortage?

During this period all kittens should be kept indoors so that they do not come into contact with animals from other households or wildlife.

As far as possible, you should avoid admitting new kittens into your home until they have received their first vaccination course – particularly if you have existing cats in the household.

If you are thinking of letting your cat into a confined and secure area outside, please discuss this with your vet who will be best placed to advise on your individual circumstances.

## Information for breeders, rehoming centres and shelters

If you are a breeder or run a rehoming centre or a shelter then please contact your vet to discuss options for vaccinations.

## Additional resources

- [www.petsavers.org.uk/pet-guides](http://www.petsavers.org.uk/pet-guides)
- [www.bva.co.uk/resources-support/client-guides/getting-your-pet-vaccinated](http://www.bva.co.uk/resources-support/client-guides/getting-your-pet-vaccinated)



*Driving excellence in veterinary practice to  
improve the health and welfare of small animals.*

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