

What to Expect

After Your Pet's Vaccines

Vaccinating your pet is vital to protect them from serious and potentially life-threatening diseases. Although vaccine reactions are rare it is important to understand any potential side effects.



Common responses to pet vaccines

After receiving a vaccination, your dog or cat may experience mild side effects that can include one or more of the following:

- Discomfort at the vaccination site
- Mild fever
- Decreased activity level
- Swelling at the vaccination site
- Decreased appetite

For pets who received an intranasal vaccination (a mist given through the nose instead of as an injection), they may have a:

- Sneeze
- Runny nose
- Cough
- Other respiratory symptoms

These are all common responses that are not typically a cause for concern, but if any of these symptoms last more than a day or two or seem severe, contact your veterinarian.

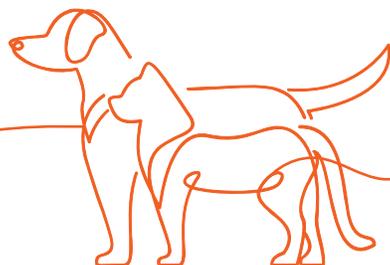
Some vaccines, especially rabies, can cause a small, firm swelling to develop under the skin at the injection site. This swelling should subside within a couple of weeks. Contact your veterinarian if the site remains swollen beyond three weeks, is painful, or increases in size.



Serious side effects of pet vaccines

Side effects of pet vaccines that require immediate attention include:

- Facial swelling
- Persistent diarrhea
- Severe coughing or difficulty breathing
- Vomiting
- Hives (skin is bumpy and itchy)
- Weakness or collapse



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How common are vaccine reactions in dogs and cats?

Vaccine reactions in both dogs and cats are considered uncommon. **The chance of a reaction from vaccines is low – approximately one to five reactions per 10,000 vaccinations.**^{1,2} They typically occur within minutes to hours following vaccination. Immediate medical attention is required because they can be life-threatening. Therefore, it may make sense to separate vaccines by two weeks or more in smaller breed dogs if they are due for several, but speak to your veterinarian about their protocol.

With regards to cats, adverse reactions post-vaccination is thought to be rare. A substantial survey conducted by Banfield Pet Hospital revealed that **within 30 days of vaccination, an adverse reaction rate was only found in 0.52% of cats.**²

Reducing the vaccine amount by half is not a valid alternative and, if done, will likely result in insufficient protection for your pet.

References:

1. Should My Pet Be Vaccinated? AAHA. Published June 21, 2019. Accessed February 27, 2023.
2. Adverse Postvaccination Reactions. AAHA. Published August 13, 2020. Accessed February 27, 2023.