

Feline Rabies Vaccination Waiver

In recent years, Rabies has become more prevalent in wildlife populations, which means humans and pets are more frequently exposed to this fatal disease.

According to California state law cats are not required to be vaccinated against Rabies. Rabies is mainly transmitted through the bite wounds of infected mammals. Although rare in rodents such as mice and voles, there can be large populations of infected bats and skunks and other animals depending on the geographic location. In June 2011 a Rabies Alert was issued by Southern California Veterinary Association. Laguna Beach Animal Services reported a cat killed a bat that was tested positive for Rabies. The cat was not up to date on Rabies vaccination and no current Rabies certificate could be furnished. As a result, the cat must undergo SIX month Rabies quarantine, per California state law. Had the Rabies vaccine been current, only **ONE** month quarantine would be required. Also the owner is going through Post Rabies exposure treatment.

Although cats are relatively resistant to rabies, they can be potential source of infection for humans and there is no treatment available. According to the AAEP Advisory Panel "Rabies virus vaccination is highly recommended for all cats, and is required by law in some states, vaccination for indoor cats is also recommended due to the potential for exposure from a bat or other animal that has entered the house. "

For these reasons San Juan Animal Hospital recommends vaccinating Indoor and/or Outdoor cats for Rabies yearly.

If you cannot substantiate the Rabies vaccination status on your pet and you decline vaccinating your pet we must consider him/her to be unvaccinated and the following public health regulations might apply:

1. If your pet is unvaccinated, bites a person or animal and **shows clinical signs** consistent with rabies, but does not die and is not euthanized, he/she must be strictly quarantined at a veterinary facility approved by a public health officer for 10 days **at your expense**.
2. If your pet is unvaccinated, bites any person, and dies or is euthanized within 10 days of the bite, his/her brain tissue must be sent to the state diagnostic laboratory for Rabies testing.

As evidence above, the Rabies vaccination status of your cat can have serious consequences should he/she bite a human or another animal. If you decline vaccinating your cat against Rabies you are going against San Juan Animal Hospital's recommendations. In the event that your pet has been exposed to Rabies you accept full financial and medical responsibility for my decision.