

# NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SENIOR SERVICES

## DURATION OF IMMUNITY FROM THREE OR FOUR-YEAR RABIES VACCINES\*

For rabies control purposes in New Jersey, the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services (NJDHSS) recognizes the following durations of immunity for dogs and cats vaccinated with **three or four-year rabies vaccines**:

	AGE OF ANIMAL AT TIME OF VACCINATION	
	3-6 Months	Over 6 Months
Initial Vaccination**	One Year Duration	One Year Duration
Each Subsequent Booster Vaccination***	One Year Duration	Three or Four Year Duration

\* For a list of USDA approved rabies vaccines with a three-year duration of immunity, refer to the current Compendium of Animal Rabies Control. **Note:** CONTINUUM rabies and CONTINUUM feline HCP-R vaccines are approved for a four-year duration of immunity for the rabies fraction of the vaccine.

\*\* Includes dogs and cats with an unknown vaccination history where this is the first known vaccination.

\*\*\* Booster vaccinations should be given at least 28 days after the initial vaccination.

Veterinarians should advise animal owners of dogs and cats that have received an initial rabies vaccination that the animal is not considered fully immunized (protected against rabies) until 28 days after vaccine administration. Owners should be advised not to leave such animals unattended outside where they could be exposed to rabid animals.

Previously vaccinated animals in which immunity has lapsed should be given a three or four-year duration of immunity upon booster vaccination.

Veterinarians administering rabies vaccines should certify the full duration of immunity, as stated on the vaccine label, on all rabies certificates. Failure to do so may result in unnecessary euthanasia or quarantine of animals, as well as difficulty with pet licensing regulations. Either a one, three, or four-year duration of immunity should be certified, following the chart above. There are not any vaccines currently marketed with a two year-duration of immunity.

The DHSS recommends revaccination of dogs and cats prior to expiration of the previous vaccination to ensure a beneficial overlap of immunity. Administering a rabies vaccine before the duration of immunity of a previous vaccination has expired is not associated with an increased occurrence of adverse reactions in dogs.

## PET LICENSING

Pursuant to N.J.S.C. 8:23A-4.2, in order to issue a dog license, the pet owner must first supply to the dog licensing clerk a rabies vaccination certificate signed by a licensed veterinarian indicating that the animal's duration of immunity extends throughout at least the first ten months of the twelve month licensing period. Animals that have a duration of immunity which expires prior to the ten month cut-off must receive a booster rabies vaccination prior to licensure. Boostering an animal before expiration of the previous vaccine has not been associated with an increased occurrence of adverse reactions and is not medically contraindicated.

Prepared by the NJDHSS, Infectious and Zoonotic Disease Program, (609) 588-3121.

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