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VACCINE POLICY

WHY WE REQUIRE VETERINARIAN ADMINISTERED VACCINES FOR ALL PETS ENTERING OUR HOSPITAL FACILITIES

Dear Pet Owner,

To help ensure the protection of your pet as well as other pets under our care, we require that pets be vaccinated for commonly communicable diseases, especially if they are to be hospitalized, boarded or surgically treated at our hospital. Even healthy appearing pets can be infected with diseases that may be transmitted to other animals. Proper veterinary evaluation and vaccination are the best barriers to disease.

We ask that you provide a certificate from a licensed veterinarian documenting the required vaccinations, or that you provide us with the name of the veterinarian or clinic where vaccinations were given so that we may obtain the necessary information. If your pet is not currently vaccinated, we will provide that service upon admittance to the hospital.

We DO NOT accept, nor recommend owner-given vaccines for the following reasons:

1. We care about your pet's health, and we want to ensure animals housed in our hospital facility are adequately protected if exposed to communicable diseases.
2. Written instructions provided with the over-the-counter vaccines cannot adequately educate you on proper vaccine administration. In addition, pharmacists are not trained in animal diseases and mistakes can be made.
3. Injury can occur because of lack of training. For example, children can pick up a needle and injure themselves. Many people have been bitten while attempting to vaccinate their pet. Finally, there is the possibility of injuring the pet itself.
4. Vaccines purchased over-the-counter are often improperly stored and thus ineffective. You have no control over the storage of the vaccine before you purchased it. Veterinarians know where their biologics are manufactured, and choose them based on effectiveness, and store them properly.
5. No animal should be vaccinated without a prior physical examination performed by a licensed veterinarian. Vaccines administered to an unhealthy animal may be ineffective or even harmful to the pet.
6. Severe allergic reactions (anaphylaxis) may occur following routine vaccine administration. Pet owners are not prepared to handle this complication, and pets can die as a result.
7. Syringes and needles are considered hazardous medical waste. Disposal of such items in a landfill is illegal! Liability for this waste is reason enough not to be involved with home vaccinations. USED NEEDLES ARE A HEALTH HAZARD and must be properly disposed.

If your pet has been vaccinated by you or someone other than a veterinarian, we will ask that it be properly revaccinated by our staff or any licensed veterinarian prior to hospitalization. The health and well-being of your companion animal and the promotion of responsible pet ownership are our primary concerns.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey J. Smith, DVM