

**NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
Communicable Disease Service**

**POLICIES AND GUIDELINES FOR ANIMAL RABIES VACCINATION**

The New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) has established the duration of immunity from injectable animal rabies vaccines:

[http://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/lizdp/documents/duration\\_rabies\\_vaccine.pdf](http://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/lizdp/documents/duration_rabies_vaccine.pdf)

Only a duly licensed veterinarian shall administer rabies vaccinations to animals.

**BOOSTERING DOGS AND CATS WITH LAPSES IN THEIR RABIES VACCINATION SCHEDULE**

In general, all dogs and cats that have received at least one vaccination in their life should receive a three-year duration of immunity on booster (assuming use of a 3-year vaccine), even if they may be several years overdue for the booster. Please refer to the Duration of Immunity guidance document, linked above for more information.

**RABIES CERTIFICATES**

The veterinarian administering the rabies vaccine shall provide written certification of the inoculation. A fully completed rabies certificate (NSPHV Form #51) shall be provide to each animal owner. Veterinarians administering rabies vaccines should certify the full duration of immunity, as stated on the rabies vaccine label. Either a one or three-year duration of immunity should be certified.

The veterinarian must sign each certificate and include his/her address, telephone number, and veterinary license number.

**ADVICE TO OWNERS OF DOGS AND CATS NEWLY VACCINATED OR THOSE TOO YOUNG FOR VACCINATION**

Dogs and cats that are under vaccination age (less than 3 months of age), or those which have received an initial vaccination less than 28 days previously, are not considered protected against rabies if exposed to the virus. Veterinarians should advise the owners of these animals of this, and strongly recommend that these animals not be left outdoors unattended. Situations have arisen where pet owners have left unvaccinated or newly vaccinated pets outside unattended, where they have sustained exposures to known or suspect rabid animals, resulting in euthanasia or four-month confinement of the pet. Veterinarians can help to prevent these situations, which often involve puppies and kittens, by educating their clients.

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