

NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
Communicable Disease Service

DURATION OF IMMUNITY FROM THREE-YEAR RABIES VACCINES*

For rabies control purposes in New Jersey, the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) recognizes the following durations of immunity for dogs and cats vaccinated with **vaccines approved for a three-year duration**:

	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 Year Duration

* For a list of USDA approved rabies vaccines and their duration of immunity, refer to the current Compendium of Animal Rabies Control (<http://nasphv.org/Documents/NASPHVRabiesCompendium.pdf>)

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

Previously vaccinated animals with expired immunity should be given a three-year duration of immunity upon booster vaccination with a product labeled for a 3-year duration.

Veterinarians administering rabies vaccines shall certify the full duration of immunity, as stated on the vaccine label (either 1 or 3 years), on all rabies certificates. Failure to do so may result in unnecessary euthanasia or quarantine of animals, as well as difficulty for the owner to comply with pet licensing regulations. There are not any vaccines currently marketed with a two or four year-duration of immunity.

The NJDOH 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 is NOT medically contraindicated.**

PET LICENSING

Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 8:23A-4.2, 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 the animal's immunity before expiration of the previous vaccination has not been associated with an increased occurrence of adverse reactions.