



Chastain Veterinary Medical Group Pet Health Fact Sheet

New Rabies Vaccination Requirements

On February 27, 2003, the Texas Board of Health approved changes to the Texas Administrative Code, pertaining to Rabies Control and Eradication. The amended law went into effect on **March 19, 2003**.

One of the most important effects of this revision of the law has been to permit pet owners and veterinarians to elect to vaccinate dogs and cats against rabies only once every three (3) years – under some circumstances – instead of instead of vaccinating against rabies every single year, like we've always done.

These amendments are posted on the Texas Department of Health Zoonosis Control Division's website at www.tdh.state.tx.us/zoonosis. The new language for Section 169.29 (a) is as follows:

The owner or custodian (excluding animal shelters) of each domestic dog or cat shall have the animal vaccinated against rabies by four months of age. The animal must receive a booster within the 12-month interval following the initial vaccination. Every domestic dog or cat must be revaccinated against rabies at a minimum of at least once every three years with a rabies vaccine licensed by the United States Department of Agriculture. The vaccine must be administered according to label recommendations. Livestock (especially those that have frequent contact with humans), domestic ferrets, and wolf-dog hybrids should be vaccinated against rabies. Nothing in this section prohibits a veterinarian and owner or custodian from selecting a more frequent rabies vaccination interval. Health and Safety Code, §§826.014 and 826.015 allow local jurisdictions to establish more frequent rabies vaccination intervals.

In summary, here is what all that means:

1. All dogs and cats must be vaccinated against rabies by the time they are 4 months (16 weeks) of age.
2. All dogs and cats must receive a second rabies vaccination within one year of receiving their first vaccination, regardless of the type of vaccine used or the age at which the animal was initially vaccinated.
3. If the animal has received at least two vaccinations and the last vaccination consisted of...
 - a. an annual rabies vaccine, then the animal must receive a vaccination within 12 months.
 - b. a triennial vaccine, then the animal must receive a vaccination within 36 months.
4. If the animal has received at least two vaccinations prior to this amendment and a triennial vaccine was used for the last vaccination, this amendment is retroactive (i.e., the animal's next vaccination will be due within 36 months from the date of its last vaccination).

Chastain Veterinary Medical Group

Meadow Brook Animal Hospital – 972-529-5033 · Preston Road Animal Hospital – 972-239-1309

<http://chastainvets.info>

5. Pet owners and veterinarians may continue to vaccinate dogs and cats against rabies every 12 months, if they wish.
6. City, town and local governments and local Animal Control departments may choose to require a more frequent rabies vaccination interval, even though the Texas department of Health suggests that vaccination of dogs and cats against rabies every three years is fine. Please see below for more

For more detailed information, pet owners can contact their Texas Department of Health Regional Zoonosis Control office, or Dr. Jane Mahlow, Director, Zoonosis Control Division at 512-458-7255 or email The.Vet@tdh.state.tx.us.

What About My Area?

Please see here for the Texas Dept. of Health's list of local rabies control authorities and rabies vaccination requirements:

<http://www.r03.tdh.state.tx.us/Programs/zoo/LRCA%20and%20Vac%20Requirements%20Table.pdf>

Chastain Veterinary Medical Group

Meadow Brook Animal Hospital – 972-529-5033 · Preston Road Animal Hospital – 972-239-1309

<http://chastainvets.info>