

**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.

**New Jersey Department of Health
 CERTIFICATE OF EXEMPTION FROM RABIES VACCINATION**

Name of Owner (Print)		Telephone Number
Street Address		City, State, Zip
Animal Name	Sex <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female	Neutered <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Species	Age	Weight
Breed	Color(s)	
<p>The animal described above has been examined by me on: _____ and I have determined that it would be medically contraindicated to vaccinate this animal due to an infirmity, other physical condition, or regimen of therapy.</p> <p>Describe nature and duration of infirmity, other physical condition, or regimen of therapy:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>PLEASE NOTE: A reluctance to administer a rabies vaccine prior to the expiration of the previous vaccination will not be accepted as a valid reason for an exemption. Early boosting has not been associated with an increased occurrence of adverse reactions and is not medically contraindicated.</p>		
Name of Veterinarian (Print)		License Number
Address		
Signature of Veterinarian		Date
<p>This certificate is valid until _____ (not to exceed one year from date of last examination).</p>		
<p>By signing below, I acknowledge that I am the owner of the animal described above. I have been informed that this animal is exempt from rabies vaccination for a period of up to one year. I have also been informed of the following important information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This animal must be re-examined by the expiration date listed above. At that time the animal must either be vaccinated against rabies or, if exemption status still applies, a new certificate must be issued. • Once the duration of immunity from the last rabies vaccination has lapsed, this animal is not protected against rabies and, as a result, is at increased risk of becoming infected if exposed to a rabid animal. • It is recommended that the animal be closely observed when outside, walked on a leash and not allowed to run at large. Prevent the animal from coming into contact with suspect rabid animals such as raccoons, skunks, foxes, groundhogs, bats and free-roaming cats. • Exemption from rabies vaccination does not exempt the animal from other laws related to rabies. If this animal is potentially exposed to rabies (e.g., due to a bite or exposure from a rabid or suspect rabid animal), the local health agency will require it to be euthanized or quarantined for six months. If this animal potentially exposes a person to rabies (by bite or other means), it must be confined for 10 days as approved by the local health agency where the animal resides. 		
Signature of Owner		Date Signed

A copy of this certificate must be provided to the owner of the animal listed above and kept as proof of exemption.
For dogs, this certificate must be presented with an application for a dog license.