

Uses of In-Clinic Serology Testing

PATHOGEN	Usefulness of Antibody Testing
FPV	Useful for assessment of immunity because presence of antibodies correlates strongly with protection. ^{6,40} Result can be used to decide whether to vaccinate (i.e., only vaccinate antibody-negative cats)
FHV-1	Not reliable for assessment of immunity. ^{1,40} Effective immunity against FHV-1 requires both an antibody and cell-mediated immune response. Result should not be used to decide whether to vaccinate
FCV	Not reliable for assessment of immunity. ^{1,40} Effective immunity against FCV requires both an antibody and cell-mediated immune response. Result should not be used to decide whether to vaccinate
FelV	Useful for assessment of exposure and/or diagnosis of infection (in combination with other testing methodologies). Recently a rapid in-clinic test kit to detect antibodies to FeLV transmembrane protein (p15E) was released in Europe. A positive p15E antibody result cannot differentiate between exposure and infection. FeLV-vaccinated cats usually have low levels of antibodies to p15E. ⁴¹ Results from FeLV antigen testing (and not antibody testing) should be used to decide whether to vaccinate. Rapid in-clinic FeLV test kits detect soluble p27 antigen in whole blood, serum, or plasma and are not affected by FeLV vaccination. The AAFP recommends testing all cats for FeLV p27 antigen prior to initial vaccination. There is no proven benefit to vaccinating infected cats ^{14,34,42}
FIV	Useful for diagnosis of infection. ³⁴ Between 2002 and 2015, an inactivated whole-virus vaccine was available in North America that interferes with antibody results using some test kits. ^{43,44} FIV-vaccinated cats may test antibody positive for more than 7 years after the last vaccination. ⁴⁵ Additionally, cats may travel from locations where the vaccine is still in use to the USA, Canada, and other countries where the vaccine is not available. Rapid in-clinic test kits able to differentiate between FIV-infected and FIV-vaccinated cats are available ⁴⁶
Rabies	Vaccination against rabies is essential in regions where it is required by statute/law or where the virus is endemic and should follow label recommendations. Serum neutralization results cannot be used to decide whether to vaccinate against rabies

The 2020 AAHA/AAFP Feline Vaccination Guidelines are available at aaha.org/felinevaccination.

These guidelines were prepared by a task force of experts convened by the American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA) and the American Association of Feline Practitioners (AAFP). This document is intended as a guideline only, not an AAHA or AAFP standard of care. These guidelines and recommendations should not be construed as dictating an exclusive protocol, course of treatment, or procedure. Variations in practice may be warranted based on the needs of the individual patient, resources, and limitations unique to each individual practice setting. Evidence-based support for specific recommendations has been cited whenever possible and appropriate. Other recommendations are based on practical clinical experience and a consensus of expert opinion. Further research is needed to document some of these recommendations. Because each case is different, veterinarians must base their decisions on the best available scientific evidence in conjunction with their own knowledge and experience.

