



## Vaccine Reaction Information

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While vaccines are considered to be a routine and safe part of your animal's health care regime, and can prevent a number of serious or fatal illnesses, vaccine reactions may occur in some patients. While the risk of a vaccine reaction is greatly outweighed by the benefits that immunization provides, pet owners should be aware of the possibility of this occurring in recently vaccinated animals.

### **"Normal" Reactions**

Just as in people, some pets run a slight fever after vaccination. They may be a bit lethargic and possibly not as interested in food for a day or so after receiving their shot. Those who have this type of reaction normally ride it out on their own, with little to no intervention. You can provide them with a warm and quiet place to rest and tempt them to eat with tasty treats or warmed up food. As long as improvement is noted within 24 hours after the vaccination there is no need to request assistance from your veterinarian.

A small lump may be present at the site of vaccination. This should subside on its own within 2-3 months. If the lump persists or gets larger you should contact your veterinarian. Vaccine associated cancers, although rare, are a possibility. You may notice that your vet no longer vaccinates your pets in their scruff (an area of loose skin between the shoulder blades), and now uses the hind legs instead. This is because a cancer in the neck region is not as easy to cure via excision or amputation as it would be in the hind limbs. Today's vaccines are much less likely to lead to cancer than those used in the past.

### **Allergic Reactions**

Anaphylaxis is another name for an allergic reaction. This can occur when your pet's immune system reacts strongly against one or more components in the vaccine. A pet may have their initial shot with no ill effects and suffer from an allergic reaction upon their booster shot. Anaphylaxis can be life threatening and requires veterinary care immediately upon detection. Common signs of this type of reaction include: vomiting and diarrhea, facial swelling, hives, lethargy, and possibly a sudden collapse after receiving a vaccine.

Most pets who suffer from vaccine reactions are still routinely vaccinated because the diseases prevented by vaccination can be fatal. These animals are often pre-medicated with an antihistamine to prevent the onset of anaphylaxis.

### **Vaccine Reactions at the Toronto Humane Society**

While a vaccination reaction can be quite frightening, it is generally fairly easy for a veterinarian to treat. If one of your animals who was vaccinated at the Toronto Humane Society's Vaccination Service or at the Spay/Neuter Clinic, suffers from anaphylaxis please call us immediately at 416-392-2273 ext. 0 between the hours of 10:00am – 6:00pm. We can provide treatment while our clinics are still operational. If the vaccine reaction occurs very close to, or after the close of the clinic you will need to get your pet to your own veterinarian or an after-hours clinic for treatment (please see back for a list of local emergency clinics). Currently the vaccine clinic runs from 4:30pm to 8:00pm on operational evenings and the spay/neuter clinic is open from 7:00am-4:20pm Tuesday through Saturday.

Animals that have had previous reactions should not be seen at our vaccination clinic, but rather scheduled as a morning appointment with a private practitioner so that they may be closely monitored post vaccination.

## Emergency Clinic Reference List

*This list is a reference only. The Toronto Humane Society does not necessarily recommend or endorse these facilities. This is not a complete list and there may be emergency veterinary services which are not listed below. Emergency clinics are simply listed in alphabetical order.*

### **Central Toronto Veterinary Emergency Clinic**

1051 Eglinton Ave West  
416-784-4444

### **Mississauga-Oakville Veterinary Emergency Hospital (MOVEH)**

2285 Bristol Circle, Oakville  
905-829-9444

### **Toronto Veterinary Emergency Hospital (TVEH)**

21 Rolark Dr, Scarborough  
416-247-8387

### **Vaughan-Richmond Hill Veterinary Emergency Clinic**

10303 Yonge St, Richmond Hill  
905-884-1832

### **Veterinary Emergency Clinic (VEC)**

#### **SOUTH:**

920 Yonge St Suite 117  
416-920-2002

#### **NORTH:**

280 Sheppard Ave East  
416-226-3663

### **Veterinary Emergency Hospital of West Toronto**

150 Norseman St  
416-239-3453

### **VETS Toronto**

1025 Kingston Rd  
416-690-0625

### **Willowdale Animal Hospital**

256 Sheppard Ave West  
416-222-5409

### **404 Veterinary Emergency and Referral Hospital**

510 Harry Walker Parkway South  
905-953-1933