

# Managing a short-term feline core vaccine supply issue

25 Jan 2024

Last updated 22 January 2024

Due to complicated supply problems post-COVID, there is currently a shortage of feline vaccines in Australia.

MSD advised the AVA on 22 January that they have recently restored their supply of feline vaccines to the Australian market. In their [letter to veterinary practices](#), MSD announce that there is now supply of Nobivac FLEX Tricat (F3) and deliveries to veterinary wholesalers commenced from mid-January 2024. MSD anticipate there will be a further release of Nobivac FLEX Tricat (F3) to wholesalers in late January 2024 and another re-supply in late February 2024. MSD Animal Health assure they are doing everything possible to meet the ongoing demand for feline vaccines in Australia.

Information provided by another vaccine supplier, Boehringer Ingelheim, indicates availability of their F3 vaccines in late March 2024 and F4/F5 in late April 2024. Their January supply update document can be found [here](#).

## What can we do?

1. Veterinarians should endeavour to prioritise vaccination of previously unvaccinated kittens and cats wherever possible.
2. Adult cats that have had a series of 2-3 kitten vaccines and an annual booster are at much lower risk of vaccine preventable infectious disease as studies have demonstrated extended duration of immunity. Delaying boosters for adult cats until supply normalises in early 2024 is unlikely to have significant impact on their wellbeing, though this should be assessed on a case-by-case basis according to the individual cat's risk profile.
3. For kittens, consider giving 2 vaccines rather than 3 – and keeping kittens in a safe environment until they receive a final vaccine at 16 weeks.
4. Informed consent must be obtained from clients for any off-label use of vaccines – including explanation of any risk and documentation of this discussion with the client in the clinical record.
5. Boarding catteries may ask veterinarians for advice – see section below on Boarding Establishments.
6. Veterinarians may be approached for advice about individual animals who are more than, say, 6 months overdue for vaccinations, and these should be considered on a case-by-case basis considering time since last vaccination, previous vaccination history, medical history, concurrent conditions, and the possibility of natural boosting of immunity through contact with other cats.
7. Without a collective approach, we risk outbreaks of respiratory viral disease and feline panleukopenia. Such outbreaks may then impact unvaccinated adult cats in the wider community. Until the supply chain is re-established, we need to prioritise vaccinating at-risk animals.

## **KEY MESSAGE: prioritise kittens and delay adult boosters if possible.**

The above is derived from an advisory document authored by a group of subject matter experts (view in full [here](#)).

## **Boarding Establishments**

The Pet Industry Association of Australia (PIAA) have provided the AVA with information regarding cats being accepted in to boarding facilities without up-to-date vaccination status.

**Queensland, Western Australia, Tasmania, South Australia, and the Northern Territory** do not have enforceable requirements around vaccination of cats prior to entering boarding facilities.

However, New South Wales, the Australian Capital Territory and Victoria do have Boarding Codes which require up-to-date vaccinations.

- The **NSW** DPI has officially granted an amnesty so that this requirement won't be enforced for a short period.
- As a result of lobbying by the AVA, the **ACT** Government will not be proactively enforcing the requirement for adult cats to be up to date with their annual booster vaccinations when boarding at ACT boarding facilities until 1 March 2024. Further details available here.
- The **Victorian** Government have delegated the decision to Local Councils, and provided the following advice to local Victorian councils this week:

***Cat Vaccination Shortages – Boarding Establishments (Victoria)***

*Animal Welfare Victoria (AWV) is also aware that the cat vaccination shortages pose challenges for boarding facilities that must comply with requirements under the Victorian Code of Practice for the Operations of Boarding Establishments (including catteries).*

*For registered boarding facilities, concerns must be raised directly with the relevant local council as the registering and regulating authority. **Importantly, previous advice (2022), already acknowledges the use of triennial***