

Vaccines for Your Dog

We ask that you review the following information prior to discussing which vaccinations you elect to have administered to your pet. While we can help provide you with appropriate information to weigh the risks and benefits, it is ultimately your decision as to which vaccines you wish to have your pet receive. Please feel free to ask the doctors or technicians any questions you may have.

According to the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) and the American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA) there are two broad categories of vaccinations: core and non-core.

Core Vaccines are those vaccines which every dog should receive, regardless of lifestyle and exposure to other dogs. These include **rabies, distemper and parvovirus**. These are given as a series of vaccinations as a puppy (or, in the case of rabies, as a single dose), then an "adult booster" a year later. The rabies vaccine is then given every 3 years. (This interval is mandated by state law). Although the distemper/parvovirus vaccine is labeled to be given every year to adult dogs, evidence now supports that the protection lasts longer. The current recommendation for adult dogs is a distemper/parvovirus booster every 3 years after the first adult booster.

Non-Core Vaccines are those vaccines which may or may not be necessary since the diseases they prevent occur sporadically, are more common in specific circumstances, or are new or "emerging" diseases. **These vaccines are available and can be given based on your dog's risk.**

- **Leptospirosis:** This disease occurs sporadically in the United States, usually in the summer or fall, and is caused by various strains (serovars) of a bacteria. Infected dogs often have a fever, do not eat well, may vomit, and may suffer liver and kidney damage. This disease, even when treated, can be fatal. Infected dogs shed the bacteria in their urine, and humans can become infected by contact with contaminated ground water, soil, or animal urine. Some serovars are carried by raccoons or skunks, which means the disease is becoming more problematic in suburban areas. Other serovars are harbored by farm animals, deer and mice, and are therefore more common in rural areas. Currently, the recommended vaccine contains four serovars and is boosted every year after an initial series of 2 vaccines, 2-4 weeks apart. This was often a part of the old "distemper shot", so most adult dogs will only need to continue with

this annual booster. The newer vaccine has a lower risk of side effects than previous Leptospirosis vaccines. This disease can be passed on to people ("zoonotic") and the disease can be found sporadically in our area. However, the vaccine may not give complete protection and cannot protect against all strains. Although rare, toy breed dogs may be more likely to have an allergic reaction to this vaccine. If you have a toy breed dog, please discuss the risks with the doctor or technician to decide if we should elect not to do this vaccine. If your dog (of any size) has had a previous reaction to this vaccine, this vaccine will not be given.

- **Bordatella or "kennel cough" Vaccine:** This vaccine helps protect dogs against some forms of contagious bronchitis, and is recommended for dogs that stay in boarding facilities, go regularly to groomers, visit dog parks, attend dog shows or obedience classes, or frequently contact large numbers of dogs. This is given every 6 months.
- **Lyme Vaccine:** Any dog who may be exposed to ticks is at risk, as the ticks transmit the bacteria during feeding. Rural dogs as well as suburban dogs may come into contact with the deer tick. **While effective tick control remains the cornerstone for reducing the risk of all tick-borne diseases,** you may elect to reduce the risk further by having your dog vaccinated against Lyme disease. This is given as a series of 2 vaccines, given 2-4 weeks apart, then an annual booster given in the spring. Before starting this series, we will test your dog for Lyme disease with the 4DX Heartworm test. This vaccine will not protect a dog who is already positive for the disease.

Risks of vaccination: in general, vaccines may cause localized pain or swelling, low grade transient fever, allergic reactions such as swelling of lips and eyelids, and mild lethargy. With any vaccine, anaphylaxis (a potentially fatal hypersensitivity reaction) may occur. While there is no direct cause and effect relationship between vaccinations and certain immune-mediated diseases, this continues to be investigated. Overall, the risk of any reaction is quite small compared to the risk of the diseases the vaccines protect against.