

VACCINE GUIDE - Canine



THE "CORE" VACCINES

Core vaccines are considered mandatory for all dogs. They protect against diseases that are very deadly and/or contagious.

Rabies

Rabies is fatal to dogs, cats and humans. It can be spread to our pets (and us) from tangling with wildlife, including- raccoons, bats, skunks and groundhogs. Rabies is so dangerous that by law all dogs and cats must be vaccinated. Puppies and Kittens get their first dose when they are at least 12 weeks old, and then a booster within 9-12 months. After that it is boosted every 3 years by Massachusetts state law.

Distemper (Distemper-Adeno2-Parvo-Parainfluenza or DA2PP)

This vaccine protects against:

- Canine Distemper- a deadly virus affecting the nervous system
- Two types of Canine Adenovirus - a group of viruses causing hepatitis and respiratory disease
- Parvovirus or "Parvo" - a horrible gastrointestinal virus that can be fatal, this virus can be tracked just on your feet!
- Parainfluenza - a highly contagious respiratory virus

Puppies get a dose of this vaccine every 3-4 weeks, starting at 8 weeks of age and receiving their final vaccine when they are at least 16-18 weeks old. Adult dogs get one dose when they are one year old and then need a booster every 3 years. For older dogs that have had several doses, sometimes a blood titer can be checked to confirm they are fully immune and can skip a dose of the vaccine.

THE "NON-CORE" VACCINES

Non-core vaccines are given based on the lifestyle of the pet. The majority of dogs need most of these, but there are instances that some dogs do not need all of them.

Kennel Cough (Bronchi-Shield Oral Bordetella Vaccine)

This vaccine is not just for dogs that stay at kennels. All dogs that contact other dogs are susceptible to kennel cough. Exposure could happen at the groomer, daycare or even just a walk down the street. For almost all dogs this vaccine is actually more of a "core" vaccine. Kennel cough is a group of viruses and Bordetella bacteria that cause respiratory signs. Dogs that have not been vaccinated that catch the disease get very sick and can even develop pneumonia and require hospitalization. Dog that are vaccinated against it and get exposed may not get sick at all or may have a much milder respiratory illness. Some may need antibiotics or some cough medicine, but will still recover quickly without complications. Most dogs should get this vaccine once per year. Some kennels require it twice per year for extra protection and this is perfectly safe to do.

Leptospirosis

Leptospirosis, or Lepto, is a bacterial disease spread in the urine of wildlife. Wet weather can lead to contaminated stagnant water that can expose dogs. The disease can cause liver and kidney failure and can be fatal. It is contagious to humans. Even in urban areas, dogs can be at risk because of rat urine contaminating puddles. Our vaccine protects against 4 common strains of Lepto. Dogs receive two doses of vaccine, 2-4 weeks apart, often starting as puppies, then a yearly booster.

Lyme

Lyme disease is caused by a bacteria spread by the bite of those teeny, tiny, little deer ticks that can be easy to miss on our furry friends. Modern tick-prevention products kill about 99% of ticks, but we are just so inundated with ticks in this area that many dogs need extra protection against this disease. Some dogs get mild Lyme disease and others can have a severe infection and even end up in kidney failure. It is impossible to predict how each dog will react to the infection, but there is a protective vaccine. Dogs receive two doses of vaccine, 3-4 weeks apart, often starting as puppies, then a yearly booster. A quick, in-house, test will let us know if a dog has been exposed to Lyme prior to administration of the vaccine.

Flu (Canine Influenza H3N8 & H3N2)

Canine Flu, or Influenza, was first identified in 2004. This airborne disease can make dogs very sick with fever, cough, pneumonia and congestion. Like humans, older and weaker dogs that catch the flu can be more susceptible to complications and death. Though not as common as kennel cough, it can be very contagious and infect a group of dogs in a kennel or daycare. We have had cases reported in our area from time to time. Some kennels and day cares require the canine flu vaccine for boarders. The vaccine is very safe and gentle. Dogs receive two doses of vaccine, 2-4 weeks apart, often starting as puppies, then a yearly booster.