

CANINE DISTEMPER

Distemper can cause severe disease, affecting many different organs in the body. The signs include high temperature, discharge from the eyes and nose, coughing, vomiting and diarrhoea. Thickening of the skin on the foot pads and nose can also occur, explaining why the disease is sometimes known as “hard pad”. Those dogs which survive the initial stages can develop severe neurological complications, including seizures.

INFECTIOUS CANINE HEPATITIS

The signs of this disease can be very variable, with some dogs showing no obvious signs and others developing serious signs including fever, loss of appetite, vomiting, abdominal pain and jaundice. In extreme cases, sudden death can occur before any signs of disease are evident.

CANINE PARAINFLUENZA

Canine parainfluenza virus is one of the pathogens which causes “kennel cough”. Dogs with this disease suffer from a harsh dry cough that can persist for several weeks.

LEPTOSPIROSIS

There are two main forms of this serious bacterial disease.

1. Infection with *Leptospira canicola* can cause a variety of problems, ranging from mild disease to severe illness and death. In some dogs, the infection can cause chronic kidney problems which are very difficult to treat effectively.
2. *Leptospira icterohaemorrhagiae* can cause vomiting, fever, kidney/liver failure and death in severe cases. Infection is usually contracted after contact with rats and/or infected rat’s urine. Dogs which do survive can shed the bacteria in urine, acting as a source of infection for other dogs. It is important to remember that this disease can be transmitted to humans (Weils disease).

Foreign travel and rabies vaccination

The Pet Travel Scheme (PETS) means that you can take your dog abroad with you, provided certain requirements are met. Before travelling, your pet needs to be microchipped, vaccinated against rabies and issued with a Pet Passport.

The Scheme only applies to countries within the EU and certain other listed countries, so it’s vital to check the requirements for your destination country before travelling. For full details, speak to your vet or visit the DEFRA website for the latest information.

If you do take your dog abroad, remember that there may be other diseases which are not found in the UK. Make sure you talk to your vet about the steps you can take to minimise the risks to your dog. Many of these diseases are transmitted by ticks, so the use of an effective tick treatment can help to reduce the chances of contracting a serious disease.



Why vaccinate your dog?

Published for your
veterinary surgeon by



Why vaccination is important

Dogs of all ages can and do become seriously ill or die from infectious diseases that could have been prevented through vaccination.

Vaccination offers the most effective way of protecting your dog against many of the most serious infectious diseases, including Canine Parvovirus, Canine Distemper, Infectious Canine Hepatitis, Canine Parainfluenza and Leptospirosis.

How vaccines work

Vaccines work by stimulating the body's immune system to mount a protective response against specific disease(s). The immune system then remembers these diseases, enabling it to defend the body against any natural exposure to that disease in the future.

Every vaccine lasts for different lengths of time, depending on the disease it is protecting against. Most animals require regular boosters to "remind" the immune system and enhance the level of protection.

Vaccination schedule

PRIMARY VACCINATION

In the first few weeks of life, puppies are normally protected against disease by antibodies (immunity) from their mother's milk. This immunity decreases over time and has usually disappeared by approximately 12 weeks of age. Vaccination is then needed to protect your puppy against disease.

Puppies generally receive a course of two vaccinations, with an interval of 3 to 5 weeks between injections. This primary course ensures that your puppy's immune system has the best chance of mounting a strong protective response.

BOOSTER VACCINATION

The immunity generated by the puppy course of vaccinations does not last for life. Regular booster vaccinations are necessary to maintain the highest possible level of protection against serious infectious diseases.

These regular annual visits also allow the vet to give your dog a full clinical examination and check up, and spot the early signs of any disease conditions which may be developing.

Diseases

The diseases against which dogs are commonly vaccinated can cause serious, often fatal, disease and can be very difficult to treat effectively. Prevention is much better than cure.

The diseases can be contracted by direct contact with infected dogs, but many of the viruses can also survive in the environment. So even if your dog doesn't meet other dogs when out walking, or lives mainly indoors, they are still at risk.

CANINE PARVOVIRUS

Parvovirus is a very serious viral infection, with several outbreaks reported in the UK every year. Infection with parvovirus can cause severe vomiting, bloody diarrhoea and dehydration. The most severely affected cases, usually young unvaccinated dogs, rapidly deteriorate and intensive emergency treatment is necessary. However, even with treatment, many dogs don't survive.

