



Why remembering to vaccinate dogs is so important



Shaping the future of animal health

Virbac

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Does my dog need to be vaccinated?

Vaccination is very important for dogs - it protects them from all sorts of nasty diseases that could make them very ill and perhaps even kill them. If your dog has not been vaccinated yet, don't worry – talk to your vets about it soon.

Even the best trained dog in the world will sniff at things. Smell is how dogs communicate, so for them it's perfectly natural to stick their nose into everything. Unfortunately, it's this behaviour in particular that makes dogs so susceptible to infectious diseases. Short of keeping your dog in isolation (and removing your own shoes whenever you're with it) your dog will inevitably be exposed to the risk of serious infection every day of its life.

Vaccination will help protect your dog from this risk, providing it with an immunity that, with regular boosters, will last for the duration of the recommended booster interval.

What is vaccination?

Vaccination is when your vet gives your dog a particular medicine known as a “vaccine”. This is usually by an injection with a needle into the skin around the dog's neck. You will know that, having had the vaccination, your dog is protected against catching some really nasty illnesses.

Does it hurt?

Some dogs don't feel anything, but some may feel a small pinch. But it won't be for long and after a bit of fuss from you, your dog will have forgotten all about it.

Will a vaccine protect my dog forever?

No, not forever - your dog will need regular booster vaccines to make sure they stay protected. It's a good idea for your dog to see the vet once a year anyway for a general health check.



What is your dog at risk from?

Just as with humans, there are many possible illnesses and diseases that your dog is at risk from, but the most common, potentially fatal diseases (against which vaccines provide protection) are shown below.

DISEASE SYMPTOMS	RISK
CANINE DISTEMPER (D)	
Coughing, vomiting, runny nose and eyes, loss of appetite and diarrhoea. Later on, may experience fits.	An airborne virus that puts younger dogs at greatest risk, especially in cities. Potentially fatal.
INFECTIOUS CANINE HEPATITIS (H)	
Vomiting, pale gums, very high temperature, loss of appetite, abdominal pain, diarrhoea. Later on, jaundice.	Airborne virus that affects the liver. Dogs under one year at greatest risk. Can be fatal.
CANINE PARVOVIRUS (P)	
Rapid decline, vomiting, refusal to eat and drink, rapid dehydration, abdominal pain, bloody diarrhoea.	Extremely hardy virus, transmitted via the faeces of infected dogs. Can be carried on soles of shoes. Often fatal.
PARAINFLUENZA & BORDETELLA BRONCHISEPTICA (PI / KC)	
Persistent and harsh coughing.	Major causes of kennel cough. Highly infectious especially in dog kennels. Severely debilitating.
LEPTOSPIROSIS OR WEIL'S DISEASE (L)	
Sleepiness, high temperature, severe thirst, urinating often, abdominal pain, bloody diarrhoea and jaundice.	There are multiple strains. In extreme cases, death can occur within hours. Further details on the next page.

LEPTOSPIROSIS VACCINE

Different strains and different vaccines?

Leptospirosis (also known as Weil's disease) is a potentially fatal disease in dogs that is transmitted by rat urine and infected water (rivers, ponds, lakes, canals etc) and other hosts such as pigs and horses. Signs include sleepiness, high temperature, severe thirst, urinating often, abdominal pain, bloody diarrhoea and jaundice (yellowing of eyes, gums and skin). By vaccinating against it, you can protect your dog from this potentially devastating disease.

This vaccine is one which needs to be given every year. There are 4 different strains of *Leptospira* which you can vaccinate for in the UK and which you cover depends on which you are at risk from.

Your vet may use 'Lepto2' or 'Lepto4' depending on the factors which make you more or less likely to be at risk from different strains. 'Lepto2' is the mainstay vaccine in the UK and covers the two main strains which exist throughout the UK.

'Lepto4' is a newer vaccine which covers two additional strains, giving extended protection particularly if you are travelling abroad.

Might I need 2 injections when I only normally need one?

In adult dogs, Leptospirosis vaccines should be given annually. When you get a new dog and start their vaccine protocol, you give them 2 injections a few weeks apart to set up the immune response and gain protection.

If you are moving from 'Lepto2' to 'Lepto4', as this new vaccine contains new strains that your dog has never been vaccinated against, 2 injections need to be given initially. Following this initial course, you can go back to one a year.

Putting your dog into kennels

If you need to put your dog into kennels, perhaps to go on holiday or in an emergency situation, you will find that reputable kennels will not accept the dog without certification proving that it has been vaccinated. The same applies to dog training classes, puppy parties and dog shows - proof of vaccination will be needed.

Of course, you might be able to find a kennel that does not insist on seeing proof of vaccination - but in these circumstances you will obviously be putting your dog at high risk of infection, as the same relaxed standards may apply to other dogs.

Keeping a record of vaccination

Whenever you take your dog to the vet for its booster vaccination it is important that you remember to take along your vaccination record as well.

Your vet will want to see it to ensure that the correct vaccinations are being given at the appropriate time, and you will need to have the document updated if you intend to put your dog into kennels.

Regular health checks

Taking your dog along for annual booster vaccinations will give your vet the opportunity to carry out regular general health checks - which will become ever more important as your dog gets older and more susceptible to, for example, dental problems, skin tumours, kidney problems or arthritis.

Common questions answered

Q. Will it matter if my dog misses a year?

A. Yes it will. Vaccine doses are designed to provide the optimum protection for your pet given that it will receive a regular booster. While there is an allowance for a certain amount of “overlap protection” its effectiveness reduces with the passage of time, leaving your dog at increasing risk of infection.

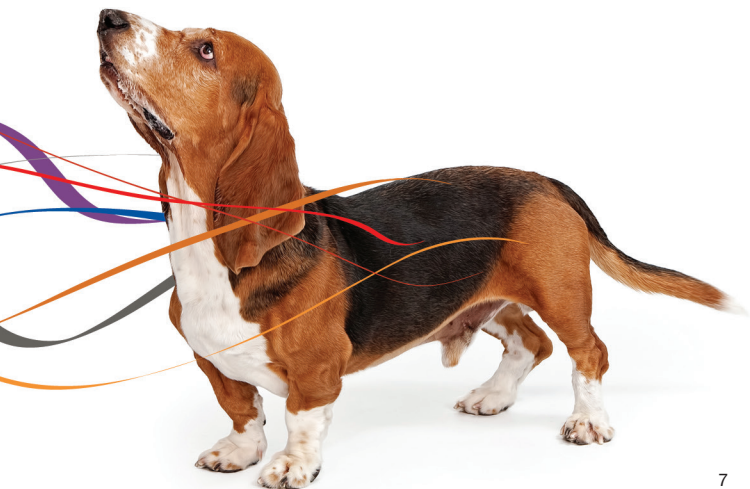
Your vet will send you a reminder when your dog is due for its booster. It is recommended that you make the appointment for vaccination as soon as possible when you receive one of these - as given today's busy lifestyles, it is far too easy to forget!

Q. Does my dog need protection against rabies?

A. Thankfully, the UK is clear of rabies, so if your dog is resident within the UK vaccination will not be necessary unless you are intending to take it abroad (ask for our leaflet on travelling abroad with your pet).

Q. If my dog catches a disease, will giving it a vaccination cure it?

A. No. Vaccination is a preventative measure, not a cure. If your dog has had a disease, it may have acquired some degree of immunity, but this cannot be relied upon. Regular vaccination will ensure your dog does not contract this disease again.





Vaccines aren't so scary!

Your vet will use a combination of vaccines as the basis of providing your pet with immunisation against all the major infectious disease risks faced by dogs in the UK.



actual size

Your vet can also provide specialist protection against Kennel Cough and Rabies - for when you're putting your dog into kennels or taking it abroad with you.



actual size



Virbac Animal Health, Woolpit Business Park,
Windmill Avenue, Woolpit, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP30 9UP
Tel: 01359 243243 Email: enquiries@virbac.co.uk
www.virbac.co.uk

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