

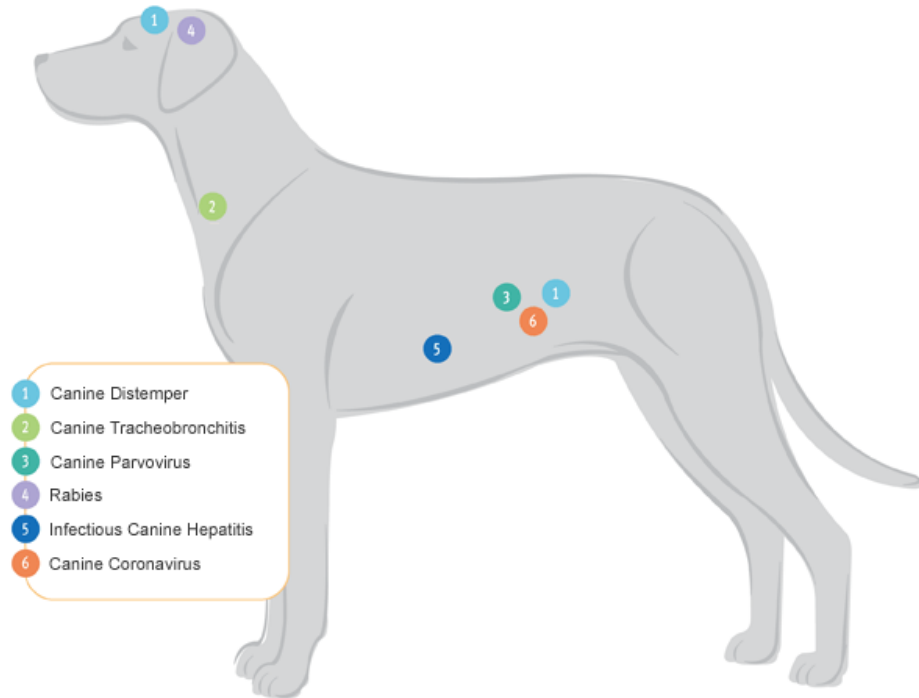
Diseases & Vaccination

Protecting your best friend

One of the most important things you can do to give your dog a long and healthy life is to ensure that he is vaccinated against common canine diseases. Your dog's mother gave her puppy immunity from disease for the first few weeks of existence by providing disease-fighting antibodies in her milk. After that period it's up to you, with the help and advice of your veterinarian – to provide that protection.

How do vaccines work?

Vaccines contain small quantities of altered or "killed" viruses, bacteria or other disease-causing organisms. When administered, they stimulate your dog's immune system to produce disease-fighting cells and proteins – or antibodies – to protect against disease.



When should my dog be vaccinated?

The immunity that a puppy has at birth begins to diminish sometime between 6 and 12 weeks. It is then usually time to begin the initial vaccinations, which will be repeated once a month until the puppy is about 3 to 4 months old. Thereafter, your dog will require repeat vaccination at regular intervals for the rest of his life. Above all, follow the vaccination schedule recommended by your veterinarian – if there is too long an interval between the first vaccination and the booster, your dog may have to undergo the series all over again.

Which vaccinations should my dog receive?

Most veterinarians believe that your pet should be protected against those diseases which are most common, highly contagious and which cause serious illness. Such diseases could include Canine Distemper, Infectious Canine Hepatitis, Canine Parvovirus, Canine Tracheobronchitis and Rabies. Other vaccinations may be recommended, based on your veterinarian's evaluation of the risks posed by such factors as your dog's particular heredity, environment and lifestyle.

1 Canine Distemper

Vaccination against this often fatal, hard-to-treat disease is absolutely essential. Highly contagious, it is spread by discharges from the noses and eyes of infected dogs. Symptoms can include listlessness, fever, coughing, diarrhea and vomiting; convulsions and paralysis may occur in the disease's final stages. The distemper virus attacks many organs, including the nervous system, which may be permanently damaged, even if the dog recovers.

2 Canine Tracheobronchitis (CANINE COUGH)

Just as with the human common cold, this respiratory-tract infection is easily transmitted from one

dog to another, so vaccination is imperative if your pet will come in contact with many other dogs in such situations as obedience training or boarding at a kennel. Caused by various airborne bacteria and viruses, including Canine Parainfluenza virus, Canine Adenovirus Type II and Bordetella Bronchiseptica, you'll first notice its onset by your dog's dry, hacking cough.

3 Canine Parvovirus

Very contagious, debilitating and widespread, the disease caused by this virus emerged in many parts of the world only in 1978. Spread through infected feces, the highly resistant virus can remain in the environment for many months. Symptoms include high fever, listlessness, vomiting and diarrhea. Vaccination is the only certain method of preventing this potentially fatal disease, which is most severe in young pups and elderly dogs.

4 Rabies

This incurable viral disease affects the central nervous system of almost all mammals, including humans. It is spread through contact with the saliva of infected animals (which can include skunks, foxes, raccoons and bats) through bites or any break in the skin. Vaccination will provide your pet with much greater resistance to rabies if he is exposed to the disease, but you must be aware that there is no cure once it occurs. For this reason, many municipalities absolutely require that all dogs receive rabies vaccinations on a regular basis. Plus, you will definitely have to prove that your dog is vaccinated if you travel with him – whether across the province, to the United States or around the world.

5 Infectious Canine Hepatitis

Caused by Canine Adenovirus Type I, this disease is transmitted among dogs by contact with secretions, such as saliva, infected urine or feces. Its symptoms are similar to those of the early stages of distemper. Causing liver failure, eye damage and breathing problems, the course of this disease can range from mild to fatal. Vaccination remains the best protection.

How effective is vaccination?

Like any drug treatment or surgical procedure, vaccinations cannot be 100% guaranteed. However, used in conjunction with proper nutrition and acceptable sanitary conditions, vaccination is clearly your pet's best defense against disease. Plus, when you consider what treating a serious illness can cost you and your beloved dog in terms of both money and distress, prevention through vaccination is extremely cost-effective.