

## Core Vaccines

Vaccinations are a very important part of owning a new puppy and keeping up to date with these is just as important as your dog ages. Most people are aware of their importance but many do not know what diseases these vaccinations protect against. The primary vaccine that all dogs are recommended to have protects against canine distemper virus, canine infectious hepatitis and parvovirus.

The most common virus we see in unvaccinated dogs is parvovirus. This is an awful disease which mostly affects puppies but can affect dogs of all ages. Signs of parvovirus include bloody diarrhoea, lethargy and vomiting. Treatment needs to be aggressive and consists of IV fluid therapy and antibiotics. Many animals are unable to be saved due to severe dehydration despite veterinary care. Vaccination is your best method of prevention. The virus can survive in the environment for years which is why it is so important not to take your puppy to public places before it is fully vaccinated.

Canine distemper virus is a highly contagious disease that can affect dogs of any age with young puppies being at highest risk. Symptoms include fever, coughing, sneezing, nasal discharge, vomiting, diarrhoea, loss of appetite and depression. It eventually progresses to cause seizures and paralysis. The recovery rate is very low for this disease. Although this is not a common disease anymore, outbreaks have occurred in areas where vaccination rates are low.

Canine hepatitis is another viral disease which, like distemper is extremely contagious and often fatal. Dogs of any age can become infected however severe cases are rare in dogs over two years of age.

Symptoms include high fever, depression, and loss of appetite, vomiting, diarrhoea and acute abdominal pain. In severe cases death can occur within 24 to 36 hours. Dogs that recover may develop long term liver and kidney problems and can act as carriers spreading the disease to other dogs for many months.

These diseases are all protected with the core vaccine which your puppy will receive. Other vaccinations are also available such as kennel cough and leptospirosis. Your vet will discuss these with you and you can make the decision if these will be right for your dog.