

A number of dangerous diseases can still affect dogs in the UK, and some of these can even be transmitted to humans. Vaccination is the only safe way to provide immunity against all these diseases. If carried out regularly according to your vet's advice, it can protect your pet for life. **Regular boosters are vital to maintain protection...**

...Show you care



Immunity and Vaccination

Immunity is the body's natural ability to fight infection. By vaccinating we expose puppies to antigens (parts of the disease causing virus or bacteria) so that they can mount an antibody response so protecting them against the disease.

Immunity in Puppies

As long as the mother is immune, puppies are usually protected during the first few weeks of life, thanks to immunity passed through the mother's first milk (colostrum). However, this immunity fades rapidly, leaving the puppy susceptible to disease within a few weeks. At this point, vaccination can take over from the mother in providing protection.

Vaccination

The initial vaccination course is made up of two injections given at least 2 weeks apart. You will then need to wait a further 2 weeks after the second injection before taking your puppy for walks in public places.

This primary course can be started as early as six to eight weeks of age (depending on vaccine brand used) - but since most are already older than that when they're bought, it's vital to talk to your vet as soon as possible about vaccination timings.

Socialisation

It is so important to begin socialising your puppy as soon as you get him/her. The important socialisation period is up to 16 weeks of age, so you should introduce him/her to various sights and sounds from your arms until fully vaccinated. A socialisation checklist is included later in this booklet.

Re-vaccination

Immunity to disease doesn't last indefinitely, and will gradually fade, leaving your dog at risk. Annual boosters are essential to maintain protection, but the frequency of diseases boosted may vary depending on the vaccine brand and disease agent.

Record of Vaccination

On completion of your dog's primary course, you'll be given a certificate that contains a record of the vaccination and tells you when the next booster is due. Boarding kennels, training classes and, of course, your vet will need to see this certificate, so always keep it in a safe place.

Remember: Regular boosters are vital to maintain protection.

What diseases do we vaccinate against in the UK?

Canine Parvovirus

A hardy virus that can survive for long periods in the environment. Caused major epidemics in the 1970s and remains widespread in pockets throughout the UK. Usually fatal.

Canine Distemper (Hard Pad)

Another severe, usually fatal disease, causes multi organ failure.

Infectious Hepatitis

Still exists in the UK, although now rare due to the success of ongoing vaccination programmes. Often fatal.

Leptospirosis

Contracted from the urine of rats and/or other dogs. Canals and rivers can be contaminated, and forms of the disease are widespread in the UK. Can also cause severe disease in humans (Weil's disease).

Infectious Bronchitis

Extremely unpleasant whooping cough-like infection, usually transmitted in places where dogs gather together (kennels, shows, dog training clubs etc). It is rarely life-threatening, but can cause severe airway damage.

Rabies

Fatal disease, not found in the UK. Vaccination is required if your dog is travelling abroad.

There is no satisfactory treatment for many of these serious diseases, which can kill your pet. In the absence of vaccination, or if the interval between vaccinations is too great, your pet may be unprotected against fatal disease. If you are in doubt as to whether your pet is properly protected, consult your Veterinary Surgeon about booster vaccination. It costs so little and does not hurt your pet.