
Basic Medical Care Recommended for Dogs

Vaccination is the single most cost-effective form of "health insurance" you can provide for your dog. It is imperative to follow the routine vaccination schedule recommended by your veterinarian. The purpose of vaccination is the prevention of infectious (contagious) diseases, many of which are very debilitating or life-threatening. Below are the most commonly recommended vaccines and a brief description of the disease they prevent.

DHLPP (Also known as a 'five-in-one'), is composed of:

D is for Distemper

Canine distemper is a highly contagious, often fatal, viral disease. Early symptoms can include fluctuating body temperature, mucous discharge from the eyes and nose, and squinting due to sensitivity to light. Infected dogs are often depressed and not eating, and can eventually develop severe respiratory problems, including pneumonia. They may also show signs of neurological problems, which may lead to seizures and death.

H is for Hepatitis (also known as Canine Adenovirus)

Infectious Canine Hepatitis is a viral disease affecting primarily the liver and lymph nodes and has been implicated in respiratory infections. Signs of infection can include depression, no appetite, vomiting and abdominal pain. This disease is rarely seen due to effective and widely used vaccines.

L is for Leptospirosis

Leptospirosis is caused by a bacterial spirochete that can infect cattle, sheep, pigs and dogs. Transmission can occur from any of these species to another and to humans. The disease affects primarily the kidneys and can cause permanent kidney damage and death. Because leptospirosis can infect humans, all dogs should be routinely vaccinated in the interest of public health.

P is for Parainfluenza

Parainfluenza Virus affects the respiratory tract in dogs, often in conjunction with bordetella bronchiseptica to cause what is commonly called "kennel cough". Symptoms can include a cough and/or a runny nose.

P is for Parvovirus

Canine Parvovirus is a canine specific virus that causes a severe and oftentimes deadly disease affecting primarily the gastrointestinal tract. The most common symptoms are vomiting, bloody diarrhea, listlessness, no appetite, fever and ocular discharge. The virus, which is shed through the feces of infected dogs, is extremely hardy, surviving for long periods of time outside the body. Parvovirus is particularly deadly in puppies that suffer from severe dehydration as a result of the diarrhea and vomiting. Puppies under 5 months of age should not be walked in public areas frequented by other dogs and should avoid contact with other dogs or their feces.

Bordetella Bronchiseptica

Bordetella bronchiseptica is a bacterium that affects the respiratory tract, often in conjunction with parainfluenza virus. It is the main agent of kennel cough, a dry hacking cough and/or gagging. Bordetella vaccines have been developed in an intranasal form and an injectable form; intranasal administration produces a more rapid immunity. The vaccine is highly recommended for dogs that are

going to be kenneled or around many other dogs.

Rabies Virus

Rabies is a deadly disease that can affect the central nervous system of all mammals. In the interest of public health, vaccination against rabies is required for all dogs by law, and in some areas for all cats. It is highly recommended that all dogs and cats be vaccinated.

Heartworm Disease

Heartworms are spread by mosquitoes. These worms start off life living in the bloodstream of your dog. These larvae (microfilaria) are detectable when in the bloodstream. They can live for several years here. Eventually they migrate to the heart. They can grow to completely fill the heart and significantly restrict the amount of blood the heart can pump. This will eventually lead to the death of the dog. There is a simple monthly pill that when given to the dog will kill the microfilaria. It is important to test for the heartworm before the monthly dosage is given. It is highly recommended that all dogs be tested for Heartworm and put on the monthly preventative.