



CORE VACCINES

Core vaccines are defined as those vaccines which dogs, regardless of circumstances, should receive. Core vaccines protect animals from severe, life-threatening diseases which have global distribution

VCA veterinarians recommend:

- Giving core vaccines to dogs (distemper, canine adenovirus, parvovirus and rabies)
- Starting a vaccine program between 6 and 9 weeks of age to begin proper lifelong protection
- Giving vaccines every 3 weeks until a pet reaches 15 to 17 weeks of age. This time interval allows for maximum immune response and therefore, the best protection.
- Boostering pets one year after the puppy or kitten hood vaccines
- Vaccinating thereafter every 1 to 3 years (or as recommended by your VCA veterinarian) depending on a pet's lifestyle and risk factors

What Vaccines Should My Puppy Get?

Puppies should receive a series of vaccinations with a combination vaccine product that protects against parvovirus, distemper and hepatitis. Your puppy must also be vaccinated against rabies. There are a variety of other vaccines that may or may not be appropriate for your pet.

Are Any Vaccines Required By Law? MA requires that all dogs have their rabies vaccine by 6 months of age. An up-to-date canine rabies

vaccination is a legal requirement. Be sure to keep proof of your dog's rabies vaccines with his medical records.

How Often Should My Adult Dog Be Vaccinated?

Your veterinarian can best determine a vaccination schedule for your dog. This will depend on the type of vaccine, your dog's age, medical history, environment and lifestyle. Some adult dogs might receive certain vaccines annually, while other vaccines might be given every 3 years or longer.

When Should My Puppy Be Vaccinated?

If his mother has a healthy immune system, a puppy will most likely receive antibodies in mother's milk while nursing. Puppies should receive a series of vaccinations starting at six to eight weeks of age. A veterinarian should administer a minimum of three vaccinations at three- to four-week intervals. The final dose should be administered at 16 weeks of age.

Are There Any Risks Associated With Vaccines?

Immunizations mildly stimulate an animal's immune system in order to create protection from specific infectious diseases. This stimulation can create mild symptoms, ranging from soreness at the injection site to fever and allergic reactions. Another less common side effect is the development of immune mediated disease following vaccination. That said, it is important to realize that vaccines have saved countless lives, and play a vital role in the battle against canine infectious disease. Additionally, rabies vaccinations have saved the lives of countless dogs—and many humans as well. In some developing countries, hundreds of people die each year due to rabies contracted from dog bites. As with any medical procedure, there is a small chance of side effects. In most cases, the risks are much smaller than the risks of disease itself. But it is important to talk to your veterinarian about your dog's medical history before he is vaccinated.

What Symptoms Should I Look For? Most dogs show no ill effect from vaccination. Vaccine reactions may be minor and short-lived or require immediate care from a veterinarian. Clinical signs include:

- Fever
- Sluggishness
- Loss of appetite
- Facial swelling and/or hives
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Pain, swelling, redness, scabbing or hair loss around the injection site
- Lameness
- Collapse
- Difficulty breathing
- Seizures

It is best to schedule your dog's appointment so that you can monitor him for any side effects following administration of the vaccine.

What Should I Do if I Think My Dog Is Having an Adverse Reaction to a Vaccine?

If you suspect your dog is having a reaction to a vaccine, call your veterinarian immediately.

We also require your dog to have monthly treatments of flea and tick medication, as well as, heartworm medication.