



Vaccination

Treatment of sick and injured animals is obviously a very important part of our work, but we are great believers in preventative medicine. Vaccination of puppies and kittens plays a major role here.

Puppies

Puppies can be vaccinated from 6-8 weeks of age although they must be 10-12 weeks old for the 2nd part of the course. The vaccinations provide protection against five life-threatening diseases, **Distemper**, **Parvovirus**, **Leptospirosis**, **Infectious Hepatitis** and **Coronavirus**, additional protection against one of the causes of Kennel Cough, **Parainfluenza Virus** is included in the one simple injection.

We realise that a lot of you have heard stories of worrying possible side effects to vaccinations. These are very rare. Current scientific evidence shows that the risks of not vaccinating your pet far outweigh any possible risks from the vaccinations. Also, there is discussion at present as to whether the beneficial effects of vaccinations may last longer than one year. This is, as yet, unproven. What we do know for certain is that the four diseases above, can, and will, kill. We still see cases in unvaccinated dogs, and the heart-breaking fact is that it can be so easily prevented.

Once puppies have had their vaccination course is it really important for them to have boosters every year? **YES!**

It is vital to maintain their immunity as older dogs can still succumb to these killer diseases. There is no evidence that the immunity lasts longer in older dogs, in fact elderly dogs, like elderly people, are more likely to have a poor immune system.

Kennel Cough is an infectious condition that can be caused by a number of different organisms. Should your dog be at risk, through attending boarding kennels or dog shows, another vaccination is available. This vaccination lasts 6 months and will be given on request.

Kittens

Vaccination of kittens usually starts when they are 9 weeks old and they also need another injection 3-4 weeks later.

We routinely vaccinate kittens against four different viruses, the **Feline Enteritis Virus**, the two **Cat Flu Viruses**, and the **Feline Leukaemia Virus**. Again these can all cause life-threatening diseases and can be very contagious.

In addition it is possible to vaccinate cats against an infection called **Chlamydia**. This can be a particularly persistent problem in breeding establishments, causing chronic conjunctivitis and respiratory symptoms. However it is thought to be a lot more common in pet cats than previously believed, and we will be happy to advise you further.

As with dogs, it is considered necessary to boost a cat's immunity every year to provide life-long protection. No reputable boarding establishment will take your dog or cat if their vaccinations have lapsed.

Rabies vaccinations are available for pets destined to travel abroad.

A **full health assessment** is carried out at the time of every vaccination, and this is always a good opportunity to examine your pet for any problems that you may, or may not, have been aware of. Early diagnosis of a condition is generally the key to a successful outcome!

KEY POINTS

- Puppies and kittens should be vaccinated
- Dogs and cats need yearly boosters
- Elderly dogs and cats still need their vaccinations
- These diseases are still around, and they can kill!