



# Maidstone Veterinary Clinic

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## DOG VACCINATIONS

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Diseases that are caused by contagious and infective viruses tend to come in cycles. This can range from a low grade simmering infection in some of the population (due to a low virulent virus) up to the epidemic that spreads like wildfire - infecting and causing illness in almost all those it comes in contact with (a highly virulent new strain).

The purpose of vaccinating your dog is to prevent the development of clinical disease by either preventing your pet from catching the virus - or if they do get infected - by limiting the severity and the effects of any infection. Our job, as your pets veterinarian, is to recommend what we think is the best vaccination course for your dog / puppy to ensure it can live a healthy and "disease free" life.

### Recommended Vaccination Protocol

***We recommend that all infectious dog diseases currently present in NZ should be vaccinated against. Dogs should have yearly health checks at which we will tailor the vaccination schedule to suite your dogs needs and maintain their protection against these diseases.***

#### **Young Pup**

**7 week & 10 week vaccinations.** Initially a primary course of injections will be given, - the number and type will depend on the age of the animal.

#### **Older Pup/ Adult Dog**

**10 weeks or more of age & lapsed vaccinations.**

One injection of Nobivac can be given if the dog is 10 weeks or older.

This vaccine can be used on dogs whose vaccination schedule has lapsed.

Protection against the lethal diseases-Distemper, Hepatitis and Parvovirus will be not be complete until ***10 days following the last Nobivac DHP injection.*** Up to this time your pup/dog should remain on your property and avoid any direct contact with unvaccinated dogs.

### **DISTEMPER**

Distemper is a common viral infection which does not require direct body contact among dogs for its transmission. Still considered the most serious disease of dogs, distemper often causes death or permanent disability. Affected dogs usually develop nasal discharge and a cough that can progress to pneumonia and death. The cases that survive these signs will usually go on to develop nervous signs starting with muscle twitching and progressing to convulsions. Recovery is rare; the suffering is great and residual brain damage common. Treatment in view of its poor long term prognosis is questionable.

### **HEPATITIS - INFECTIOUS CANINE**

Hepatitis is a contagious viral disease spread primarily through urine, thus direct dog to dog contact is not a prerequisite for infection. Hepatitis will affect dogs of all ages but it is most severe in pups. The signs can be similar to distemper with additional signs of abdominal pain, due to enlargement of the liver and jaundice. The outcome of Hepatitis varies from slight fever to death. Corneal opacity or 'blue eye' may follow infection. Supportive treatment will consist of intravenous fluids and other medications.

### **PARVOVIRUS**

Since its devastating worldwide appearance in 1978 this disease has remained as a common cause of death in dogs. The disease is highly contagious, the virus is quite resistant and capable of surviving long periods in the dogs environment (at least a year), and infection requires very low numbers of virus. Affected dogs go off their food and become very depressed; this is followed by diarrhoea and vomiting, high fevers, dehydration and heart failure. Treatment is difficult, and usually prolonged with variable results from complete recovery to death.

## **KENNEL COUGH** (Infectious Tracheobronchitis)

This is a highly contagious disease of dogs which has more than one causative agent. Affected dogs have a persistent hacking cough that usually appears after exercise and that can be quite distressing to the dog and owner. It rarely progresses to a more serious disease but in some cases can progress into pneumonia if not treated.

There are basically two options for kennel cough vaccination: injectable and intranasal. It is important to realize that not all members of the kennel cough complex have a vaccine. Also, because kennel cough is a localized infection (meaning it is local to the respiratory tract), it is an infection that does not lend itself to 100% prevention by vaccination.

Vaccination must be regularly boosted and often vaccination simply muffles the severity of infection without completely preventing it.

### ***Injectable Vaccine***

Injectable vaccination is a good choice for aggressive dogs who may bite if their muzzle is approached. For puppies, injectable vaccination provides good systemic immunity as long as two doses are given (approximately one month apart) after age 10 weeks. Boosters are generally given annually.

### ***Nasal Vaccine***

Intranasal vaccination may be given as early as 3 weeks of age (we will routinely do it at 10 weeks of age) and immunity generally lasts 10 to 12 months. This vaccine is also boosted annually. The advantage here is that the local immunity is stimulated right at the site where the natural infection would be trying to take hold.

It takes 4 days to generate a solid immune response after intranasal vaccination so it is best if vaccination is given at least 5 days prior to the exposure. Some dogs will have some sneezing or nasal discharge in the week following intranasal vaccination. As a general rule, nasal vaccination provides faster immunity than injectable vaccination.

**VACCINATION IS NOT USEFUL IN A DOG ALREADY INCUBATING KENNEL COUGH.**

**If boarding is planned and more than 6 months that lapsed since the last booster shot, ideally the vaccine should be boosted 5 days or more before the start of boarding.**

## **LEPTOSPIROSIS**

Leptospirosis describes a disease caused by a group of spiral-shaped bacteria in the genus *Leptospira*. There are many species of this bacterium, referred to as serovars, present in New Zealand, predominantly throughout the north island. They are shed into the urine of infected animals, species such as pigs, cows, deer and rats. As such, dogs that live in or frequent areas populated by these other creatures may be at risk for contracting leptospirosis. This usually happens by ingesting infected urine (directly or indirectly, as on the fur or in a puddle of water for instance), but it can also be contracted if abraded skin comes into contact with infected urine. So drinking, swimming or walking through infected water are all means of acquiring this infection. Bacteria can be shed intermittently by infected reservoir animals for months to years and the organism thrives on its own in the soil for many months as well.

It is important to realize that leptospirosis is a zoonotic disease, which means that humans can contract the disease directly from animals – our pets included. This is a treatable disease which often affects organs like the liver or kidneys but unfortunately it will often cause serious damage to the animal, including death. Symptoms of leptospirosis can include fever, depression, loss of appetite, vomiting, conjunctivitis and generalized pain. Frequent urination and dehydration can also occur if it infects the kidneys, and this can lead to a definite change in the colour of the urine. Affected animals can also become jaundiced or icteric, meaning their mucous membranes and the whites of their eyes turn a yellowish colour.

It is best to prevent this disease from happening altogether, and for dogs at risk of catching leptospirosis we recommend a yearly booster with the Nobivac Lepto I vaccine. If your dog is just starting out its vaccine program for leptospirosis, he or she will need to have a booster 2-4 weeks after the first injection. It is then protective for one year and will only require one annual inoculation from then on, this can and is usually given in conjunction with any other required vaccines. Additionally, it can be mixed with the DHP core vaccine, meaning your dog faces one less “jab” while at the clinic!

Lepto Vaccine can be started for animals at 7 to 10 weeks of age or older as part of their primary vaccination regime.

Once a primary course has been completed yearly annual boosters are required to maintain protection. These can be incorporated with a normal annual vaccination program.

***Your dog's vaccination will include a thorough check up and will give you the opportunity to ask any questions on your pet's health that have been concerning you.***

***Any developing problems discovered at examination will be discussed.***