



Vaccination Recommendations for Dogs

What vaccines does my dog need? There is no one correct answer for every dog. There are certain vaccines that we recommend for every dog. We call those core vaccines. All of the other vaccines are called non-core vaccines. We recommend those vaccines for some dogs depending on their risk level.

Core vaccines for dogs are rabies, distemper, parvovirus, infectious canine hepatitis (adenovirus-2), and parainfluenza. All of these diseases originate from viruses.

- **Rabies** is a fatal, zoonotic (that means people can get it) neurologic disease of mammals. It is transmitted primarily from bites from infected animals.
- **Distemper** While serious, it is not always fatal like rabies. It is transmitted from contact with infected secretions from the nose and eyes. It affects many body systems including the skin, lungs, eyes, gastrointestinal tract, and brain. Distemper used to be much more common, but vaccination has decreased its incidence dramatically.
- **Parvovirus** primarily affects young dogs. It causes life-threatening diarrhea and vomiting. This disease is seen commonly.
- **Infectious Canine Hepatitis** Like it sounds, this disease affects the liver. It also can affect the eyes. Dogs can pass it along in their facial secretions, as well as urine and feces.
- **Parainfluenza** is similar to a very bad cold for dogs.

Non-core vaccines for this area also include Bordetella (kennel cough), leptospirosis, influenza, and Lyme disease.

- **Bordetella** is bacteria that causes a productive cough that can last for weeks. It is very contagious.
- **Leptospirosis** is a bacterial disease that is transmitted through the urine of infected animals like livestock, wildlife, and rodents. Dogs can get it directly from urine or bodies of water where urine has drained (lakes, ponds, streams). It can cause liver and kidney disease and is zoonotic (people can get it).

- **Canine Influenza** Central Ohio was largely spared from this one for a while, but in recent years has become more prevalent. There are two strains and it causes the flu-like signs you would expect. People do not get this one.
- **Lyme disease** has been becoming more of a concern in Central Ohio, each year we see more Black-legged ticks that are capable of transmitting the bacteria. It can cause joint pain and lameness, kidney and heart disease at its worst. Sometimes dogs show no signs.

It is easier to evaluate which vaccines your dog needs if you just look at their lifestyle:

Your kind of dog	What they do	What vaccines they need
Outdoor explorer dog	Go hiking, swimming, hunting	Core vaccines plus Leptospirosis and Lyme
Social dog	Get boarded or groomed, go to dog parks	Core vaccines plus Bordetella and Influenza
Adventure dog	Everything! Meet other dogs, spend time in nature	Core vaccines plus non-core vaccines listed above
Stay-at-home dog	Spend their time away from unknown dogs and nature	Core vaccines

Now we know what vaccines are needed. When are they given?

- Rabies vaccine is first given once after 12 weeks of age. A booster vaccine is given one year after that, then once every three years.
- Distemper, Parvovirus, Infectious Canine Hepatitis, and Parainfluenza vaccines are given together in one syringe. We commonly call it a “DA2PP” vaccine. We start in puppies at 6 to 8 weeks of age, giving booster vaccines every 3 to 4 weeks until 18 to 20 weeks of age. Young dogs get a booster one year after that. The following year, dogs begin a 3-year schedule.
- Bordetella vaccine goes in the nose or mouth (without a needle). It is started in puppies and given once a year.
- Influenza, Lyme, and Leptospirosis vaccines are given twice (first vaccine with a booster in around 3 weeks) to older puppies and adults getting them for the first time. Boosters are given yearly after that.

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