

Vaccination Protocols for Home Boarding and Day Care

What are we vaccinating against with standard boosters and why?

The exact combination of your dog's combination vaccine depends on your dog's age and individual disease-risk profile, but in general, the most important diseases that the vaccine protects against are canine distemper, canine adenovirus-2 infection (hepatitis and respiratory disease), canine parvovirus infection, and parainfluenza. The abbreviation for this combination vaccine is frequently written as "DHPP," "DA2PP," "DHPPV," or "DA2PPV" on a pet's health records.

The letters in these abbreviations are defined as follows:

D = Canine distemper virus. Infection with this virus is serious, with a death rate approaching 50 percent in untreated dogs. The virus attacks the respiratory, digestive, and brain/nervous systems of dogs.

H = Hepatitis (or A2). Because this vaccine protects against canine adenovirus-2 and canine adenovirus-1, it is often referred to as A2. Canine adenovirus-1 causes canine infectious hepatitis, a serious disease that affects the liver. Canine adenovirus-2 causes respiratory disease and is one of the infectious agents commonly associated with tracheobronchitis, also known as kennel cough.

A2 = Canine adenovirus-2 (or H). This virus causes a respiratory disease in dogs (see above).

P = Canine parvovirus. A common viral disease that is caused by the canine parvovirus type 2 (CPV-2) virus. The virus attacks the gastrointestinal tract and immune system of puppies and dogs, causing severe vomiting and diarrhoea. It can also attack the hearts of very young puppies.

CPV-2 is highly contagious and spread through direct contact with infected dogs or infected faeces. It is easily carried on hands, food dishes, leashes, shoes, etc. The virus can survive for more than a year in faeces and soil through extremes of heat, cold, drought, or humidity. Though 85 percent to 90 percent of treated dogs survive, the disease requires extensive supportive patient care and can be expensive to treat. In untreated dogs, the mortality rate can exceed 90 percent.

Therefore, a notation of "DA2PPV," "DHPP," "DA2PP," or "DHPPV" in a pet's vaccination record means that your pet was vaccinated against canine distemper, hepatitis (canine adenovirus-2 and -1), parvovirus and parainfluenza.

L = Leptospirosis. This potentially serious bacterial disease attacks the kidneys and liver of infected dogs and can be transmitted to humans. Vaccination against this disease is generally considered noncore but may be recommended in areas where leptospirosis is common.

Leptospirosis is a disease caused by infection with *Leptospira* bacteria. These bacteria can be found worldwide in soil and water. There are many strains of *Leptospira* bacteria that can cause disease.

Leptospirosis is a zoonotic disease, which means it can be spread from animals to people. Infection in people can cause flu-like symptoms and can cause liver or kidney disease.

Common risk factors for leptospirosis in dogs include exposure to or drinking from rivers, lakes or streams; roaming on rural properties (because of exposure to potentially infected wildlife, especially rats, farm animals, or water sources); exposure to wild animal or farm animal species, even if in the backyard; and contact with **rodents** or other dogs.

Dogs can become infected and develop leptospirosis if their mucous membranes (or skin with any wound, such as a cut or scrape) come into contact with infected urine, urine-contaminated soil, water, food or bedding; through a bite from an infected animal; by eating infected tissues or carcasses. There are a number of different Lepto vaccines, the newest covering 4 strains (lepto 4). They are aimed at covering the most common types as immunity to one strain offers very little cross protection against another strain.

You may take your dog to the vet annually to have vaccinations, but this does not mean that they are being given all boosters at every visit. Each vaccination has a different expiry period (or shelf life) and your vet will only give your dog the required boosters in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations.

If you have any questions about your dog's vaccinations it is important to talk to your vet. Your vet can give you guidance which is specific to your dog's age, lifestyle and medical status. Vaccinations or titer testing are required in order for you to use the services of a licensed home boarder.