

# Vaccines for Dogs – Synopsis of a ClientEd Handout

## What is a vaccine?

A vaccine is a preparation of either killed or altered microorganisms that is administered into the body. The vaccine stimulates the immune system to learn how to fight the microorganism so that if the microorganism is encountered in the future, the dog will either not get sick or will have less severe illness.

## Which vaccines are needed in dogs?

Depending on your locality, some infections may be more or less likely. The range of vaccines available includes rabies, distemper, adenovirus (infectious canine hepatitis), parvovirus, leptospirosis, parainfluenza, coronavirus, *Bordetella bronchiseptica*, Lyme disease, and canine influenza.



**"Your veterinarian will advise you on the appropriate vaccines for your pet based on your dog's relative risks and specific lifestyle."**

These vaccines are often available in combinations that can be given in one dose. Combination vaccines are convenient and avoid extra injections for your dog. Your veterinarian will advise you on the appropriate vaccines for your pet based on your dog's relative risks and specific lifestyle.

**Core vaccines.** Recommended for all puppies and dogs by the American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA) Canine Vaccine Task Force:

- canine distemper virus
- canine parvovirus
- canine adenovirus-2 (hepatitis)
- rabies virus

**Non-Core vaccines.** Recommended for puppies and dogs in special circumstances, dependent on the exposure risk of an individual dog by the AAHA Canine Vaccine Task Force:

- *Leptospira* species
- *Borrelia burgdorferi* (Lyme disease)
- canine parainfluenza virus
- *Bordetella bronchiseptica* (kennel cough)
- canine influenza

## Why does my dog need to be revaccinated?

In most properly vaccinated dogs, the immunity should last more than a year depending on the vaccine type, and often several years. However, immunity does decline with time and this decline rate varies with individuals. To maintain the best protection against infectious diseases, revaccinations have proven very successful.

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As vaccines are improved over time, some do not need to be given as often, depending on individual circumstances. Most dogs with low-risk lifestyles can be vaccinated every three years with the core vaccines and as needed for any non-core vaccines (most non-core vaccines require annual boosters). Your veterinarian will discuss the need and frequency of booster vaccinations for your dog based on your dog's needs and lifestyle.

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