

Importance of Vaccinating Your Pet

Vaccination Programs for Your Dog

Acredale Animal Hospital will recommend a vaccine program for your dog. Type and frequency of vaccination will be based on your dog's age, lifestyle (for example, indoor versus outdoor, frequency of contact with other dogs, etc.) and risk of exposure to infectious disease. The following list is a typical canine vaccination program that can be modified depending on the veterinarian's recommendations and your preferences.

Typical Vaccination Program

Puppies and Adult Dogs

- Canine Distemper
- Canine Adenovirus-2
- Canine Parainfluenza
- Canine Parvovirus
- Bordetella
- Rabies

Additional Vaccinations

- Influenza
- Leptospirosis
- Lyme

Frequency (for puppies): Eight weeks of age or older, three or four doses administered three weeks apart. If vaccinated before sixteen weeks of age, revaccinate with a single dose upon reaching sixteen weeks of age.

Frequency (for adult dogs): Annually or as determined by your veterinarian.

Why Vaccinate My Pet?

All dogs are at risk of exposure to various infectious diseases, some of which are life-threatening. Others such as rabies also pose a public risk. Vaccination to prevent common infectious diseases supports the first goal of medicine: disease prevention. Prevention of infectious disease is more beneficial to your pet than treating the disease once it occurs. In general, viral infections cannot be treated, but symptoms may be managed by medication. Preventive vaccinations are one of the most reliable and cost-effective methods of health care available to a pet owner.

How do Vaccines Work?

Vaccines contain killed or modified live (weakened) forms of viruses or bacteria. They stimulate production of protective antibodies in healthy animals that neutralize the virus or bacteria if the animal is later exposed. Some vaccines contain combinations of several viruses or bacteria that immunize against several diseases, minimizing inconvenience to the owner and discomfort for the pet.

How Often Should My Pet Be Vaccinated?

Immunity to most infectious diseases gradually declines over time, so periodic re-vaccination are often necessary. Frequency of vaccination is dependent on your dog's lifestyle, age and risk of disease exposure. Your veterinarian can determine the appropriate vaccination interval based on your pet's history and individual circumstances. Nursing puppies ingest antibodies from their mothers that provide early protection against infectious disease; however these antibodies also neutralize immunizing agents in vaccines. These antibodies decline and eventually disappear during the first three to four months of life. For this reason puppies need to receive a series of vaccinations beginning about six to eight weeks of age.