



Puppy Vaccination Schedule

Going to the vet repeatedly over several months for vaccinations, and then for boosters or titers throughout your dog's life, may seem like an inconvenience, but the diseases that vaccinations will shield our pets from are dangerous, potentially deadly, and, thankfully, largely preventable. With so many different diseases and vaccinations, it can sometimes be confusing to know which vaccinations puppies need and which ones are important but optional. Below is our recommended vaccination schedule for your puppy's first year. "Core" vaccines are recommended for all dogs by the AVMA (American Veterinary Medical Association). "Noncore" vaccines are based on the needs of individual dogs.

Core Vaccines

DAP Vaccine (Canine Distemper Virus, Adenovirus & Parainfluenza)

- This combination vaccine protects against some of the most common and contagious viral diseases in dogs. Canine Distemper is a serious and often fatal disease affecting multiple organ systems requiring lengthy hospitalization and usually a guarded prognosis. Vaccination against Adenovirus Type 2 virus protects against canine hepatitis. Vaccination against Parainfluenza helps protect against tracheobronchitis. *Typically, vaccination starts at between 6-8 weeks of age and continues every 3-4 weeks (with the last vaccine occurring at or after 16 weeks of age), followed by a booster a year later. Adults with previous vaccination need revaccination every 3 years.*

Parvovirus Vaccine

- Parvovirus is a highly contagious and often fatal virus that affects all dogs, but unvaccinated dogs and puppies less than four months of age are at the most risk to contract it. The virus attacks the gastrointestinal system and creates the loss of appetite, vomiting, fever, and often severe, bloody diarrhea requiring lengthy hospitalization and usually a guarded prognosis. *As with the DAP Vaccine, vaccination starts at between 6-8 weeks of age and continues every 3-4 weeks (with the last vaccine occurring at or after 16 weeks of age), followed by a booster a year later. Adults with previous vaccination need revaccination every 3 years.*

Rabies Vaccine

- Rabies virus can be transmitted to mammals including humans usually through saliva or bite wounds from an infected animal. The most commonly infected animals in the surrounding area are raccoons and bats. Georgia state law requires vaccination of dogs and cats since it is one of the few deadly diseases pets can transmit to humans. If an unvaccinated pet bites another dog or person, serious consequences may occur including quarantine of your pet at your expense up to 6 months and/or euthanasia. *Puppies*

will need this vaccine at or before 16 weeks of age, followed by a booster a year later. Adults with previous vaccination need revaccination every 1-3 years.

Noncore Vaccines

Leptospirosis Vaccine

- Leptospirosis is a bacterial disease, spread by the urine of wildlife, and is easily transmissible to people. It is transmitted between animals or people through direct or indirect contact with urine infected tissue, contaminated water sources and food. Infection can cause severe life-threatening damage to the liver and kidney even with antibiotics and supportive care. ***An initial vaccine and a booster 3-4 weeks apart is required for full immunity. Yearly booster vaccines are needed to keep immunity at a proper level.***

Bordetella / “Kennel Cough” Vaccine

- If your dog frequents dog parks, dog shows or boarding facilities, you should consider vaccinating for Bordetella bronchiseptica (AKA kennel cough). This bacterial infection affects the respiratory system, and while usually not life threatening, it can progress into pneumonia. This vaccine does not provide 100% immunity from the disease; however, it will lessen the clinical signs of the disease if your pet is exposed and hopefully speed recovery time. ***Yearly booster vaccines are needed to keep immunity at a proper level, although many boarding and grooming facilities require this vaccine every six months.***

Canine Influenza Vaccine

- Canine influenza is a relatively new disease which spreads best in enclosed spaces that house a lot of animals, such as a boarding facility, doggy day care, groomer’s shop, shows, etc. If your dog frequents any of these places, he has a higher than average chance of getting sick. This vaccine does not provide 100% immunity from the disease; however, it will lessen the clinical signs of the disease if your pet is exposed and hopefully speed recovery time. ***An initial vaccine and a booster 3-4 weeks apart is required for full immunity. Yearly booster vaccines are needed to keep immunity at a proper level.***

Vaccinations After Puppyhood

Annual Visits, Boosters & Titers

- There is a difference of opinion amongst veterinarians and scientists about the recommended frequency of vaccine boosters versus “over-vaccination”. We prefer to take a conservative and balanced approach to annual wellness visits. We agree with spacing out vaccines as much as possible and instead prefer to customize each dog’s vaccination schedule according to it’s lifestyle (whether the dog is boarded or groomed frequently, goes to dog parks regularly, goes hiking or swimming often, etc.) We also highly recommend age-appropriate diagnostics to help us detect any hidden diseases or conditions early on. The risks of cancer, diabetes, hormone disorders, kidney and liver problems all increase with age. Early detection can improve the prognosis of many diseases, keep medical costs down, and help your dog live longer.

- Many dog owners opt for titer tests before they administer annual vaccinations. Titer tests measure a dog's immunity levels, and this can determine which, if any, vaccinations are necessary. Please note that a titer test is not an option when it comes to the rabies vaccine, which is required by law.