

Disease Prevention

The Importance of Maintaining Your Dog's Vaccines



Although COVID-19 has prevented us from traveling with our dogs like we normally would (or boarding them when they can't come along), it's still important to keep your dog up to date on their vaccines. Regardless of plans to stay in or venture out, preventative healthcare saves you money, time, and —most importantly —keeps everyone healthy.

Should I Maintain my Dog's Vaccines During COVID-19?

Absolutely! Canine diseases like Bordetella, influenza, Lyme, and leptospirosis are out in full force, with no decrease in likelihood, even though we're hanging out more at home. In fact, many pets may be enjoying more "social-distancing" activities than usual, like hiking and outdoor walks in the park or visiting the dog park more frequently, increasing their exposure this year. And remember, everyday interactions between dogs are still happening. They're definitely not wearing masks.

Veterinary visits may look a little different¹ with quarantine and increased safety measures, but your dog receives the same care they normally would. And don't forget, veterinary visits are for more than just vaccines. They allow the veterinarian to thoroughly examine your dog, identify potential problems before they progress, and keep you and your whole family safe by ruling out parasites or other contagious health conditions.

Why Is It Important to Maintain Your Dog's Vaccines?

For the health of both pets and people, one of the most important reasons to maintain your pet's vaccines is rabies protection. Rabies can be transmitted to humans and is nearly 100% fatal to both people and pets, so it's essential we do everything we can to minimize disease exposure. If a pet has not been vaccinated

for rabies or is not current on a rabies vaccine, they must also be handled differently by veterinary team members or other animal caretakers.

Another reason pet owners should maintain their pet's vaccines is to avoid having to restart the vaccine series in the future, costing more time and money in the long run. Vaccines need to be re-administered on a set schedule (in many cases annually, and with some vaccines, every three years), in order to keep a sufficient level of immunity². If a pet owner chooses not to administer vaccines this year, their dogs may have to "restart" the series and require a two-dose series next year to reach effective antibody levels - negating any financial savings this year and causing an extra veterinary visit and vaccination for your dog next year.

Common Diseases and How They Spread

Here's a quick look at vaccines your veterinarian may recommend and how their associated diseases can spread.

Disease	What It Causes	How It's Spread
Canine Distemper Virus	Fever, lung disease, seizures, can be fatal	Through the air: Aerosol and droplets
Adenovirus Type 1 (Adenovirus-1)	Uveitis, liver and kidney damage	Through the air: Aerosol, droplets Contact with fluid
Adenovirus Type 2 (Adenovirus-2)	Respiratory disease, pneumonia, can be fatal	Through the air: Aerosol, droplets Contact with fluid
Canine Parainfluenza	Cough, runny nose, lung infection	Through the air: Aerosol, droplets
Canine Parvovirus	Vomiting, bloody diarrhea, bone marrow suppression, can be fatal	Via nose or mouth when in contact with contaminated feces
Canine Coronavirus Disease (CCoV)	Diarrhea	Via nose or mouth when in contact with contaminated feces
Leptospirosis	Fever, vomiting, liver and kidney damage	Contact with infected tissue or urine, or indirectly through contaminated water
Bordetella (a.k.a. Kennel Cough)	Cough, runny nose, difficulty breathing, lung infection	Through the air: Aerosol, droplets Contact with contaminated surfaces
Canine Influenza	Cough, runny nose, difficulty breathing	Through the air: Aerosol, droplets Contact with contaminated surfaces
Lyme Disease	Joint pain and inflammation, fatal kidney damage	Bites from an infected tick
Rabies	Nervous disease progressing to death	Bite from infected animal or contact with infected saliva

You can see that these diseases are all spread through a few key methods: aerosolized, nasal/oral contact, contaminated water, or by a bite from an infected animal or insect.

Aerosolized transmission, in particular, is a concern even if your dog is six feet away from other dogs. Aerosolized diseases spread when bacteria and viruses travel on microscopic respiratory droplets or dust particles that enter the air when an infected dog sneezes, coughs, or pants heavily.

It's easy to see why dogs, simply walking and exercising outside, can quickly spread disease. Our dogs are still at risk, even if we aren't traveling or boarding like we have in the past. And vaccines are still your best method to keep them healthy.

Learn more at zoetispetcare.com

1. Can I still take my pet to the vet during COVID-19? - AAHA. <https://www.aaha.org/your-pet/pet-owner-education/ask-aaha/can-i-still-take-my-pet-to-the-vet-during-covid-19/>. Accessed 7 Sep. 2020.
 2. 2017 AAHA Canine Vaccination Guidelines. <https://www.aaha.org/aaha-guidelines/vaccination-canine-configuration/vaccination-canine/>. Accessed 7 Sep. 2020.
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