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Maine Coast Veterinary Hospital Preventive Care Recommendations for Dogs

Canine Preventative Care Summary

Core Vaccines	Distemper <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial series at 8, 12, & 16 weeks Boostered at 1 year, then every 3 years 	Rabies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Given at 12 weeks Boostered at 1 year, then every 3 years 	Leptospirosis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial series at 12 and 16 weeks Boostered annually
“Non-core” Vaccines	Lyme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Started at 9 weeks or older Boostered 3-4 weeks after initial vaccine, then annually 	Bordetella <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be started at 8 weeks or older Boostered annually 	
Parasite Control And Treatment	Puppies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dewormed several times between 8 and 16 weeks Started on Heartworm prevention for year round parasite control 	Adults <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Given Heartworm prevention year round to prevent against intestinal worms Additional deworming if needed 	
Fecal monitoring	Puppies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least one fecal sample checked during initial “puppy visits” Additional samples checked periodically during the first year 	Adults <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual fecal should be performed 	
Heartworm Prevention and Testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heartworm prevention given monthly to all dogs and puppies year round 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heartworm/Tick Disease test performed annually on all dogs over 6 months 	
Flea and Tick Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flea and tick prevention given year round, for all dogs. 		

Preventive care recommendations vary somewhat for each individual pet. Lifestyle of the client and pet (and associated risk factors), concurrent disease states as well as philosophy of the client all contribute to determining the best recommendations. We will make every effort to determine this for each individual pet. What follows are our general recommendations, which apply to the majority of our patients, for preventive care.

Canine Vaccinations

All dogs should receive the following “core” vaccines:

- **Rabies:** should be given at 12-16 weeks old, again at one year of age and then every three years (unless an unknown bite wound or contact with a suspect rabid animal occurs, in which case a booster is given)

- *Rabies is an extraordinarily dangerous, invariably fatal viral disease that can be passed to humans. It is transmitted usually by the bite of an infected animal, but contact with bodily fluids of an infected animal can also cause transmission of the disease. Bats are always considered “rabies suspect” and have been known to transmit the virus by scratching. We insist on this vaccine (except in rare disease states) for the safety of you, your pet, and our staff.*
- **Distemper/Parvovirus/Parainfluenza/Adenovirus (a combination vaccine, "DA2PP")**: these are collectively referred to as the “distemper shot” and should be given at 8, 12, and 16 weeks old, again at about 1 year old and then every 3 years
 - *Canine Distemper virus causes a potentially very dangerous disease that can affect the respiratory, GI, and neurologic systems. We do not see this disease often anymore, largely due to routine vaccination. Puppies and unvaccinated dogs, especially in a shelter or pet store situation are at highest risk.*
 - *Parvovirus is another viral disease that we don't see a lot anymore, but killed thousands of dogs and puppies before the vaccine was developed. Parvo is still "out there" though, and causes potentially fatal GI disease, especially in unvaccinated or under vaccinated puppies. Because it is so hardy in the environment (the virus is shed in the stool of infected dogs), you have to assume it is “everywhere” – this is why it is so important to have your puppy vaccinated on schedule.*
 - *Parainfluenza virus is one of the microorganisms that contributes to “infectious tracheobronchitis” or kennel cough.*
 - *Canine Adenovirus causes infectious hepatitis (liver disease) in dogs.*
- **Leptospirosis**: should be given at 12 and 16 weeks old, followed by annual boosters. If given for the first time as an adult, one booster is needed 3-4 weeks later.
 - *Lepto is a potentially serious and possibly fatal bacterial disease carried by wildlife, which can affect the liver and/or kidneys, among other things. Exposure usually occurs after contact with wildlife urine. This is a potentially zoonotic disease (can be transmitted from animals to people), and many strains called serovars, exist. We are able to vaccinate for only four of these strains, but they are the four most likely to cause disease in dogs. Risk factors include hunting, swimming, or otherwise being exposed to water (even drinking from puddles), but since rodents can carry this disease, even dogs that don't engage in these activities can be exposed (anywhere-even the backyard). New England is considered an endemic area for Lepto, so although this is technically not a “core” vaccine we consider this vaccine an important one, especially since it is transmissible to humans, so we have included it on the core list. On the downside, this vaccine has the highest reaction (side effect) rate - so if a vaccine reaction is observed we may premedicate prior to giving the vaccine or discontinue it altogether. Reaction rates are still very low so in the vast majority of cases, the benefit will outweigh the risk.*
 - Note: “Non-core” vaccines are considered “optional” and whether or not they are given depend on risk factors for each dog.

The following are “non-core” vaccines, and will be given depending on risk factors and owner concerns:

- **Bordetella**: "Kennel Cough". This is an annual vaccine given as an oral or nasal drop or as an injection. Any dog that goes to daycare, dog classes, field trials, dog shows, boards/goes to a groomer, or is routinely exposed to dogs who take part in the above should receive this vaccine. Some at-risk dogs may benefit from twice-yearly vaccination. It protects against the most common bacteria that causes the disease, but not all.
 - *“Kennel Cough” is usually a self-limiting tracheobronchitis (inflammation of the airways), that causes a dry cough, often with a gag at the end. Most dogs will clear the cough within 2 weeks or less, but in very young or old debilitated dogs, secondary pneumonia is possible. Kennel cough is very contagious via aerosol (through the air). Dogs who have kennel cough should not have contact with other dogs until the cough has completely resolved.*
- **Lyme**: This is also an annual vaccine; the first time a dog receives the vaccination, it needs to be boosted 3-4 weeks later. Dogs that are active outdoors in any environment may benefit from the vaccine. In recent years we have seen a steady and startling rise in the number of dogs testing positive for Lyme in our area, so we feel that most dogs should receive this vaccine.
 - *Lyme Disease is transmitted by ticks and can cause a variety of signs, including general malaise and joint stiffness. Lyme can also have effects on the nervous system, kidneys, and many other body systems, and in a small number of cases can be fatal. The vaccine is only one way to protect your dog – using a flea/tick product is also very important.*

If you have any questions about the material presented in this handout, please feel free to call our office. We will be happy to answer any questions or concerns that you may have. We are available Monday-Friday 7:30AM to 5:00PM and Saturday 8:00AM to 12:00PM. During these hours we can be reached at **207-374-2385**.