

Dogs and cats should have a wellness exam and an update of their vaccines yearly. This is the best way to keep your furry family member healthy and protected against different diseases they are otherwise susceptible to. And some of these diseases are able to be transmitted between our pets and us (zoonotic).

Below is some information about the different types of vaccines your pet should have (core vaccines) and some vaccines that are recommended (lifestyle vaccines).

Rabies is a core vaccine required by law since this disease is zoonotic. Rabies is a very dangerous but preventable viral disease which only affects mammals (dogs, cats, humans, etc.) and is transmitted through an animal's saliva, usually entering the body through a bite or scratch wound.

The Rabies vaccine is given to your dog or cat once they are 12 weeks old or older. Dr. Lisa recommends getting your pet vaccinated at 16 weeks of age since all their vaccinations will then be due at the same time each year. Your dog's first Rabies vaccination will be good for 1 year and then given every 3 years as long as they are vaccinated on or before their due date. Your cat's Rabies vaccination is updated yearly.

Canine Distemper, Hepatitis, Parvovirus, and Parainfluenza (DHPP) is a core combination vaccine given to puppies starting at 6-8 weeks of age and boosted every 2-4 weeks until they are 16 weeks old. This vaccine is given every 1-3 years depending on where your dog is in their series.

Canine Distemper is a highly contagious viral disease which can attack a dog's respiratory and gastrointestinal tract and nervous system, causing discharge from their eyes and nose, in severe cases can cause neurological symptoms. Dogs are the main carriers of this disease but it can affect other animals as well.

Canine Adenovirus 1 (Canine Hepatitis) is a viral infection which can cause acute liver infection in dogs. This virus can be transmitted from an infected dog to other dogs through feces, urine, or saliva.

Parvovirus (Parvo) is a highly contagious viral illness and is spread from dog to dog by direct or indirect contact with infected feces. The majority of Parvo cases are seen in puppies (6-20 weeks old) but older dogs are susceptible to Parvo as well, usually if they have a compromised immune system.

Canine Parainfluenza is a highly contagious respiratory virus and one of the most common canine cough pathogens.

Leptospirosis (Lepto) is a bacterial infection that affects the liver and kidneys, and dogs can get it from ingesting, swimming, or walking in water sources (ponds, puddles, dew on the grass, etc.). Lepto is carried through the urine of animals (mainly rodents, skunks, raccoons, etc.) This vaccine is considered a “lifestyle vaccine”, but due to the amount of wildlife and abundance of water sources in the U.P. and the fact this is a zoonotic disease (transferred between animals and humans) we highly recommend having your dog vaccinated. The first time the Lepto vaccine is given, a booster is needed 2-4 weeks after the initial dose and then once a year after that. We recommend giving this vaccine at your puppy’s last two puppy visits (12 & 16 weeks) but this vaccine can be given as early as 10 weeks.

Lyme disease is a tick borne disease spread by the Blacklegged Tick (deer tick). This tick is very small, about the size of a poppy seed, so they can be hard to spot on your pet. Lyme disease causes inflammation of joints, so one symptom we look for is shifting-leg-lameness, your dog may seem lame (or limp) on different legs at different times. We are able to test for Lyme disease with a simple 10 minute blood test in house. If your dog is positive for Lyme disease, additional testing may be required for treatment. The Lyme vaccine is considered a lifestyle vaccine, though we highly recommend it due to the increased amount of Lyme disease in the U.P. The Lyme vaccine is a two part series when initially given and then boosted once every year. This vaccine can be given at your puppy’s last two puppy visits (12 and 16 weeks old) but it can also be started at any time with older dogs.

Bordetella is a lifestyle vaccine to help protect your dog from Kennel Cough. Kennel Cough is a highly contagious respiratory disease which affects your dog’s upper respiratory system. This vaccine is an intranasal (up the nose) vaccine which boarding facilities and groomers require and is also highly recommended if you plan on taking your dog to areas with other dogs (i.e. dog parks or training classes). The Bordetella vaccine can be given to puppies at 8 weeks old or older. This vaccine is given once a year and should be given at least two weeks before boarding or bringing to a groomer.

Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis, Calicivirus, Panleukopenia (FVRCP) - is a core combination vaccine which helps to protect against different highly contagious feline upper respiratory viruses which can have long-term or even life-long effects. Some symptoms include sneezing, nasal congestion, conjunctivitis, and ulcers on the mouth. This vaccine is started when your kitten is 8 weeks old and boosted every 2-4 weeks until they are 16 weeks old and then will be good for 1 year. After the first year, their vaccine can be updated every three years.

Feline Leukemia Virus (FeLV) - is a lifestyle vaccination, and highly recommended for cats who live in a multi-cat household or cats whose backgrounds are unknown. Many cats with this disease can live relatively normal lives, however their life expectancy tends to be significantly shorter. This vaccine will need to be boosted 2-4 weeks after the first dose and then will be good for 1 year. After the first year this vaccine can be given every 2 years. If you are concerned your cat may have Feline Leukemia, there is a quick in-house blood test we can run to check.

Making sure your pet is up-to-date on their vaccinations will not only keep your pet healthy but will save you money in the long run.