

Clevedale Canine Vaccination Policy

Introduction:

Vaccination against Distemper, Hepatitis, Parvovirus and Leptospirosis is at the heart of preventative medicine for your dog. Overwhelmingly, canine vaccination has reduced disease and suffering since it was first introduced. However, as we have seen less of these diseases, public debate has started to focus on issues such as vaccination frequency and adverse reactions. Using the WSAVA Guidelines for Vaccination of Dogs and Cats as well as other veterinary literature we have produced an evidence based standard vaccination policy which provides immunity without over vaccinating. However, we judge each case individually. If you feel your dog has different requirements we will be happy to discuss them with you. We use the Canigen series of vaccines manufactured by Virbac.

Lepto 2 or Lepto 4?

- There are different strains or serogroups of Leptospirosis. Canigen Lepto 2 covers against two serogroups; canicola and icterohaemorrhagiae. Canigen L4 covers against four serogroups; canicola, icterohaemorrhagiae, australis and grippotyphosa.
- At first glance it might appear that cover against four serogroups is better than two but it is worth considering your pet's lifestyle. Canicola and icterohaemorrhagiae are the most common causes of leptospirosis in the UK¹. Grippotyphosa is rare in the UK but common in France and Germany¹. Australis is rare but has been reported in the UK¹.
- The cases of leptospirosis that we see are almost always due to dogs that have had no vaccination at all rather than those who have only had Lepto 2 instead of Lepto 4.
- In summary, unless you intend to travel abroad with your dog or they are likely to swim in a lot of natural watercourses on farmland, Canigen Lepto 2 is likely to be sufficient.
- To cover against four serogroups rather than two, the Lepto 4 vaccines have more antigen in them. More antigen means the immune system is stimulated more overall. Greater stimulation increases the chances of an adverse reaction. The overall risk of an adverse reaction for Canigen Lepto 2 or Canigen L4 is "rare" which means more than 1 but less than 10 dogs in every 10,000 will have some sort of adverse reaction ranging from mild to severe. The risk of reaction for Canigen Lepto 2 is less than 2 in 10,000 and for Canigen L4 less than 7 per 10,000².

Primary Vaccination of Puppies:

- We offer two choices for vaccination of your puppy. Both include cover for Distemper, Hepatitis, Parvovirus and Leptospirosis. The difference is whether they need cover with Lepto 2 or Lepto 4.
- For our standard vaccination with Canigen DHP and Canigen Lepto 2, puppies will need 2 injections given 2-4 weeks apart with the 2nd injection no earlier than 10 weeks old. For most puppies this will mean injections at 6-8 weeks old and 10 weeks old then out for walks a week later.
- For puppies needing cover with Canigen DHP and Canigen L4, the protocol is 2 injections given 4 weeks apart with the 2nd injection no earlier than 10 weeks old. This will mean vaccinations at 6 and 10 weeks, 7 and 11 weeks or 8 and 12 weeks. In some cases this may mean puppies have to wait longer before going out on walks due to finishing the primary course later than if they had had Lepto 2.

First annual booster:

- A third injection of whatever your dog had for their primary course is given approximately 1 year later.

Ongoing vaccination:

- Dogs require vaccination against leptospirosis every year whether it is with Canigen Lepto 2 or Canigen L4³.
- Dogs only require vaccination with Canigen DHP every 3 years³.

What if vaccinations have lapsed more than a year?

- If it has been more than 3 years since your dog's last DHP vaccination, a single dose of Canigen DHP is sufficient to ensure their immunity.
- If it has been more than 12 but less than 18 months since your dog's last leptospirosis vaccination then a single dose of Canigen Lepto 2 or Canigen L4 is sufficient to reinstate immunity. However, it is important to realise that the longer it is left overdue, the weaker the immunity becomes during that 12 to 18 month period⁴.
- If it has been more than 18 months since your dog's last leptospirosis vaccination i.e. more than 6 months overdue, then they will require 2 injections 2-4 weeks apart⁴.

I have adopted an adult dog and I don't know if it is vaccinated/my adult dog has never had their vaccinations:

- They will require a first injection of Canigen DHP and Canigen Lepto 2 or L4 then a second injection 2-4 weeks later repeating the leptospirosis.

What about Kennel Cough?

- Kennel Cough is considered a "non-core" vaccination and as such it is NOT essential for every dog to have it every year. However, there are instances where cover is advisable.
- Dog walkers, boarding kennels, home boarders etc. may insist that your dog is vaccinated.
- The vaccine is given up the dog's nose and is a single dose only. It covers against two of the diseases responsible for the Kennel Cough syndrome; *Bordetella bronchiseptica* and *Parainfluenza*.
- Canigen KC can be given from 3 weeks of age. Immunity to *Bordetella* is present after 3 days and to *Parainfluenza* after 3 weeks. The immunity lasts 1 year.
- The vaccine will not stop 100% of dogs from catching Kennel Cough BUT it does make it less likely and if they do contract it then the disease is usually much milder.

Do you offer titre testing/antibody testing/blood testing to check immunity?

- Yes we do for distemper, hepatitis and parvovirus.
- It is not possible to titre test for leptospirosis.
- It involves a blood sample being taken from your pet and then sent to an external laboratory.

What about adverse reactions?

- Vaccinations stimulate the immune system to produce immunity. Rarely this can result in adverse reactions. These range from mild reactions such as temporary local injection site swelling to severe e.g. anaphylaxis. Adverse reactions are reported by vets and monitored

by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate. If a product has an unacceptably high incidence of adverse reactions then steps are taken to withdraw it or reformulate it. It is important to remember that overall, the benefit of vaccinating far outweighs the risks.

I have never vaccinated my dog and they seem fine, does it really need doing?

- While vaccines offer the individual dog immunity, they also contribute to what is known as “herd immunity”. In a population where most dogs are vaccinated it is very hard for diseases to spread and the incidence of them drops, hence the reason unvaccinated dogs do not automatically become ill. However, if everyone stops vaccinating their pets the incidence of disease will increase. Since vaccination became widespread, diseases such as distemper and hepatitis are thankfully very rare. Unfortunately, we continue to see cases of parvovirus and leptospirosis on a more frequent basis in unvaccinated dogs. Given the potential ramifications for your pet if they do catch one of these diseases, our advice is to have them vaccinated as outlined above.

References:

1. Ellis, W.A. (2010) Control of canine leptospirosis in Europe: time for a change? *The Veterinary Record*, 167, pp. 602-605.
2. Leptospira vaccination in dogs (2017) Veterinary Medicines Directorate
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/leptospira-vaccination-in-dogs#content>
3. WSAVA Vaccination Guidelines 2015. Available at
<http://www.wsava.org/guidelines/vaccination-guidelines>
4. Schuller, S. et al (2015) European consensus statement on leptospirosis in dogs and cats. *Journal of Small Animal Practice*, 56, pp. 159-179.