

The Greater Cartersville-Bartow Veterinary Group



PREVENTATIVE HEALTHCARE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DOGS

DISTEMPER COMBINATION/DHPP (Distemper, Hepatitis, Parainfluenza, Parvo)

Canine Distemper Virus causes diarrhea, fever, respiratory disease, seizures, muscular twitches, and a discharge from the eyes & nose.

Canine Hepatitis Virus attacks organs throughout the dog's body producing fever, respiratory disease, enlarged lymph nodes, and abdominal pain.

Parainfluenza Virus causes respiratory disease. While not typically life threatening unless pneumonia develops, it is one of the organisms implicated in "Kennel Cough".

Parvo Virus is a life threatening illness causing severe intestinal problems, bloody diarrhea, vomiting, depression & rapid dehydration.

DHPP Vaccination recommendations:

- Begin vaccinations at 7 weeks of age
- Continue vaccinations every 3 weeks until 16 weeks of age
- Revaccinate annually

RABIES VACCINE

All warm-blooded animals (dogs, cats, livestock, and wildlife) can become infected with rabies virus. Because rabies is also a threat to humans, many states, including Georgia, require vaccination of all dogs and cats. Even indoor animals can be exposed to rabies, often by wildlife (especially bats) entering the house.

Rabies is a virus that attacks nerve tissue, developing slowly over 10 days to several months. Infected animals may withdraw, avoid contact with people and other animals, become unnaturally aggressive, and may attack. Death always occurs once a rabies-infected animal shows signs of disease.

In North America, most rabies exists in wildlife, especially raccoons, skunks, foxes, and bats. Rabies is spread by bite wounds and exposure to the saliva of infected animals. Therefore, an unvaccinated dog involved in a fight with any animal should be suspect for rabies exposure. When rabies is diagnosed, any exposed, unvaccinated animals must be quarantined for six months or euthanized (humanely destroyed). In contrast, an exposed, vaccinated animal is given a booster vaccine and is then considered safe from infection.

If humans are infected, they can be vaccinated successfully in early stages of the disease. Treatment, however, is unpleasant and costly.

Rabies Vaccination recommendations:

- First vaccination is given at 3-4 months of age or older
- Revaccinate annually

BORDETELLA/KENNEL COUGH

Bordetella is the principle organism involved with Kennel Cough, the most common upper respiratory disease in dogs. Transmission usually occurs when dogs are housed together in close proximity such as in a boarding kennel, grooming parlor, or at a dog show. It causes a dry, hacking cough that can persist for days or even weeks.

Bordetella Vaccination recommendation:

- Puppies are vaccinated twice between 7 and 16 weeks of age
- Revaccinate biannually thereafter, as an adult dog

CANINE INFLUENZA

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Canine influenza is a newly emerging infectious disease commonly referred to as “dog flu”. Just like human flu is among humans, canine influenza is highly contagious among dogs. Because the virus is relatively new (it was first reported in the US in 2003), most dogs have no natural immunity to it. This means that virtually every dog exposed to the virus, unless vaccinated, will become infected. Symptoms are primarily respiratory in nature and similar to those human flu symptoms. This vaccine has been clinically proven to significantly reduce the severity of influenza and the length of time that a dog is sick.

Canine Influenza recommendation:

We recommend the Canine Influenza vaccine for all dogs that go to boarding and grooming facilities, visit pet stores with their pet parents and travel to dog shows. We require this vaccine for all hospitalized and boarded patients.

- ❑ Two initial doses at 3 weeks intervals, then annually as indicated

LYME DISEASE

Lyme disease is a tick-borne bacterial disease caused by the organism *Borrelia burgdorferi*. It is largely transmitted by the deer tick, but has also been isolated from the common brown dog tick seen in the Southern Tier. Clinical signs include pain and lameness, fever, lethargy, loss of appetite, and depression.

Lyme Disease Vaccination recommendation:

Currently, we are only recommending vaccination for high-risk patients due to the low incidence of the disease in our area. Please let us know if you will be traveling with your pet outside of this area.

- ❑ First of two initial doses given at 7 weeks of age or older, then annually as indicated

PARASITES

Dogs and cats can serve as “hosts” to many organisms that live in their intestines and these organisms are known as intestinal parasites. Dogs and cats can share them easily and pass them on to you and your family. Many parasites can be found in sandboxes, dirt, and grass and parasite eggs can live in your pet’s feces outdoors for months. Four groups of worms – roundworms, hookworms, whipworms, and tapeworms, and a few species of single-cell organisms, such as coccidia and Giardia – are the most common intestinal parasites.

Intestinal parasite exam recommendation:

- ❑ First deworming at 3-4 weeks of age
- ❑ Test and deworm every 3 weeks until 16 weeks of age
- ❑ Continue to test every 6 months and deworm as needed

Heartworms are spread by mosquitos and live in the large blood vessels of the lungs and heart. Heartworm disease is harmful, and can be fatal, *but is very preventable*. We recommend Revolution®, a topical year-round preventative for heartworm, fleas, tick, and ear mites. Simple monthly treatments, keep your dog protected all year long.

WELLNESS TESTING

Regardless of age, we recommend diagnostic testing at least once yearly. From puppy through adulthood, it is important to monitor for common diseases like heartworm, thyroid disease, and renal disease. As dogs age, just like you, arthritis can also become a crippling problem. By following our simple wellness program, many diseases can be caught early, adding quality and years to your pet’s life.