



Vaccination and your new puppy

This information sheet contains advice regarding vaccination of puppies to ensure that they are protected from major diseases.

First visit to the vet:

When you get your new puppy, your vet will need to check them for general health. Your vet will give general advice and discuss vaccination in particular.

When your puppy is 8 weeks old:

Your puppy is now old enough to start its vaccination course. Puppy vaccinations are very important to protect against a number of diseases and to limit the spread of disease in the dog population. Vaccination has been very successful in decreasing the number of animals we see suffering from these diseases.

The puppy vaccination course:

The puppy vaccination course requires two injections: the first at 8 weeks and then a second at 12 weeks of age.

Puppies get some short term immunity to infections passed on in their mother's first milk when they are very young (maternally derived antibodies). This immunity can interfere with the response to vaccination. By 12 weeks of age most puppies will have low enough levels of this immunity from their mothers to allow the vaccine to work properly.

There are some vaccines available that allow a second injection at 10 weeks. However, we recommend that the puppy vaccination course should not finish before 12 weeks since earlier finishes will require detailed knowledge of the level of maternal antibodies present which is impractical.

Puppy socialisation:

Earlier vaccination course finishes were introduced to allow earlier socialisation of puppies. However, this process starts from around four weeks of age and continues into adulthood and a programme of increasing puppy exposure to various experiences is ongoing from birth. Soon after the first vaccination puppies can have a degree of socialisation with other dogs where the risk of infection is very low, for example, at puppy parties or with fully vaccinated older dogs. Onset of full immunity will vary for individuals but is typically 1-2 weeks after the second injection. Thus a 12 week second injection offers an ideal balance of socialisation and maximum protection against diseases.

Please discuss this with your vet if you have any concerns.

We hope you enjoy looking after your new puppy.