

Westlane Labradors Puppy Vaccination Information

The preventative health program for a puppy usually begins between 6 and 9 weeks of age, or the first time that a puppy is brought to the veterinarian. Your veterinarian will determine which vaccinations are proper for your puppy and the following information is to be used as a guide only.

The first vaccine is usually given at 6 to 8 weeks of age, with a combination of Distemper, Hepatitis, Parainfluenza, and Parvovirus (DHPP). An additional protection against Coronavirus can be added if the virus is present in your area. Leptospirosis was given in the past during the early phase of vaccination, but has lost popularity due to severe vaccine reactions and the lack of the correct serotypes in the vaccine.

The second series of vaccines are given 3 to 4 weeks later for the same combinations as listed above. These vaccines are given approx every 3 to 4 weeks until the puppy reaches 16 weeks of age (for a total of 4 vaccinations). Some veterinarians will include the Leptospirosis vaccine at 16 weeks of age when the puppy is less likely to react to the vaccine. Leptospirosis is still a threat in some areas of the country, and your veterinarian will decide if the vaccination is needed for your puppy.

Rabies is mandated by law and is usually given between 12 and 20 weeks of age depending upon the recommendations at state and local level. Some veterinarians will separate the Rabies from the combination vaccines by 2 weeks. Other veterinarians will give the Rabies together with the DHPP vaccine. The reason for the separation is to reduce the over stimulation of the immune system.

Other puppy vaccines include Bordetella (canine cough) and Lyme disease. The Bordetella vaccination can be given by intranasal (nasal drops) vaccine. This vaccine is given to puppies exposed to other dogs especially in boarding, grooming, and training situations. The vaccine has a wide time of administration and may be given anywhere between 8 and 20 weeks of age. Not all puppies require this vaccine and your veterinarian will determine if your puppy is at risk for this disease. There is much controversy concerning the Lyme vaccination. It is only recommended for high-risk dogs in areas of the country with active Lyme disease. The vaccine has been known to cause immune mediated reactions, but may be needed if the puppy has high exposure or does field work. If the vaccine is not given, be sure to use a veterinarian recommended tick control product for your dog. These products have age restrictions so be sure to ask your veterinarian about the age to start usage. The vaccine for Giardia is usually not needed.

The following is a description of the diseases:

Canine Distemper

This is a widespread viral disease which carries a high death or mortality rate. The virus is spread through droplet infection from the eyes and nose and from fecal and urine spread. Signs include high fever, nasal and ocular discharge, coughing, pneumonia, diarrhea, vomiting, and neurological symptoms. The disease is easily spread and exposure is considered inevitable during the dog's lifetime.

Canine Parvovirus

This is a widespread virus that is spread through the feces in the environment. Puppies with this infection have gastrointestinal symptoms including vomiting, dehydration, loss of appetite, and severe diarrhea with or without blood. Most puppies are hospitalized for treatment and the disease carries a moderate mortality rate. This virus can infect the heart muscle.

Canine Hepatitis

A viral infection caused by an adenovirus present worldwide. This disease infects the liver, eye, nervous tissue, lungs, and kidney. It is commonly spread through the urine and saliva of dogs. Signs include increased thirst, lethargy, vomiting, diarrhea, fever, corneal opacity (blue eye), and bleeding tendencies. Most symptoms are those associated with hepatitis. This disease carries a moderate mortality risk.

Canine Leptospirosis

A bacterial infection which is spread through the urine of rodents and other infected wildlife, urine of infected dogs, or contaminated water. It is commonly found in rat urine. The disease infects the liver, kidneys, and intestinal tract causing high fever, kidney damage, jaundice, hemorrhage, pain, and bloody diarrhea. This disease can be transmitted from dog to human. There are multiple strains or serovars of Leptospirosis and not all strains are in certain vaccines. Only your veterinarian can determine if your puppy needs to be vaccinated and which strain of vaccine should be used.

Canine Bordetella or Canine Cough

This respiratory disease is really a combination of Bordetella (a bacteria) and Parainfluenza (a virus) which are usually combined in a vaccine. This is a very common infection that causes mild to severe respiratory symptoms in the puppy. These different organisms work together in the respiratory tract to cause sneezing, gagging, and coughing. The cough can be moderate to severe and is described as a dry "honking" cough, especially if the throat area is touched. The disease can progress into bronchopneumonia. It is very commonly spread through contaminated droplets from the mouth or lungs or by direct contact. The disease is very easily spread in grooming shops, kennels, parks, dog shows, or any place where puppies or dogs are grouped together. The vaccine can be given

by injection and/or nasal drops.

Canine Coronavirus

A virus causing mild gastroenteritis with symptoms of diarrhea and vomiting. The puppy may also be lethargic and depressed. The spread is through contaminated feces. This disease is much less severe than Parvovirus and is not found in all areas of the country.

Rabies

A fatal viral disease that infects all warm-blooded animals. The virus is spread through saliva from an infected animal which is usually spread through a bite wound or scratch. The nervous system is infected producing behavioral changes, changes in co-ordination, viciousness in dogs, paralysis of the muscles of the jaw, and seizures. Rabies is fatal in all animals and humans. Rabies vaccine is mandated by law and the duration of vaccine is regulated by each state.

Lyme Disease

Lyme Disease in dogs is usually limited to joints, and causes listlessness. More severe, rare cases can affect the heart, kidney, or brain. This vaccine is very controversial and needs to be discussed with your veterinarian.

Vaccines do not stimulate immunity immediately after they are administered. Once a vaccine is administered, the antigen must be recognized, responded to, and remembered by the immune system. In most puppies, disease protection does not begin until five days post vaccination. Full protection from a vaccine usually takes up to fourteen days. In some instances, two or more vaccinations several weeks apart must be given to achieve protection. In general, modified live vaccines and those vaccines administered intranasally provide the fastest protection. Taking your young puppy to the park, walks around the neighborhood, or pet stores is tempting but **REFRAIN** until your puppy has had the full set of vaccinations which will be a total of 4 to 5. Puppies die from Parvo, Distemper and other diseases because owners exposed their puppy before the vaccinations had time to be of any benefit.