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Canine Vaccine Client Education

Many vaccines are available to help protect your dog from diseases ranging from the mildly debilitating to always fatal. The field of vaccine research is continually evolving as is our understanding of how our pets' immune systems respond to vaccines. Our practice offers many different vaccines that we feel are the safest and most effective ones currently available. Our goal is to protect your pets from diseases that may make them very sick, or even kill them, while not exposing them to unnecessary risk of adverse vaccine reactions. Dogs in our practice area live many different lifestyles, from working dogs to predominantly indoor pets. Our medical staff will work with you to develop the vaccination program that best suits your needs and your dog's lifestyle. Below is a list of vaccines our practice offers and our recommendations:

- **Rabies**: We live in a rabies endemic area (meaning that the disease is common in the environment). This disease is passed through the saliva of infected animals, typically via bite wounds. Once contracted, this disease is always fatal to both humans and animals. This being so, Maine state law requires many domestic animals to be vaccinated for rabies. We require all dogs and cats seen by our practice to be vaccinated for rabies if they are eligible. The first rabies vaccine is good for one year. The subsequent injections are good for three years in dogs.
- **DAP (Distemper Combo)**: This vaccine protects your dog against several contagious diseases passed from one dog to another. The diseases include distemper, hepatitis (adenovirus) and parvovirus. Overall, these vaccines have played a tremendous role in reducing these diseases in our pets. This vaccine is good for one year after the puppy series and is then administered every 3 years.
- **Leptosporosis**: This vaccine protects against multiple strains of a bacterial organism called Leptosporosis. This disease is carried by many wild animals and is being seen more and more frequently in Maine. Dogs can contract the disease by drinking contaminated water or from contact with wild animals. This vaccine is administered annually to dogs at risk.
- **Lyme**: This vaccine helps to protect against a bacterial organism that can be contracted from deer ticks. Lyme disease (also known as Borreliosis) is often found in unvaccinated dogs even when they are not showing symptoms. We test for it yearly with our 4Dx test and recommend most dogs be vaccinated for Lyme due to the potential for severe symptoms following infection. This vaccine is administered annually.
- **Bordetella**: This vaccine, also known as kennel cough, protects against two respiratory pathogens, the parainfluenza virus and the Bordetella bacteria. Dogs that are exposed to other dogs frequent such as at a kennel, grooming facility, dog show or agility. This vaccine is administered every 6-12 months depending on risk.
- **Influenza**: This vaccine protects against an emerging risk for dogs, canine influenza. This disease has been reported in Maine only once, but is rapidly moving north through New England in recent years. This disease is most commonly reported in dogs that are exposed to other dogs in kennel or dog show-like settings. This vaccine is recommended only for dogs with a high risk of exposure and is administered annually.
- **4Dx Test**: This is an annual blood test that can detect 4 infectious diseases: heartworm disease, Lyme disease, ehrlichiosis and anaplasmosis. Heartworm disease is spread by mosquitoes while Lyme, ehrlichia and anaplasmosis are spread via ticks. This annual test is an important diagnostic tool in detecting these infections. In some situations, your veterinarian may recommend performing this test on your dog prior to starting the Lyme vaccine or starting heartworm prevention.