



Navarro Small Animal Clinic

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Protecting Your Puppy - Why Vaccines are Important

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When puppies are born, their immune systems are not as strong as an adult dog. Their mother will provide antibodies through her milk which will provide some protection against disease. These antibodies do not last forever, in fact they only last a few weeks. This is why puppies are vaccinated ideally at six, eight, twelve, and sixteen weeks of age.

Distemper is a contagious, incurable, often fatal, multisystemic viral disease that affects the respiratory, gastrointestinal, and central nervous systems. Exposure is considered inevitable during a dog's life. It is spread by discharges from the nose and eyes of infected dogs. The disease causes fever, diarrhea, respiratory problems, and convulsions.

Parvovirus is the most common infectious disorder of young dogs. It is a highly contagious disease characterized by bloody diarrhea. It is spread through contact with feces containing the virus, which can survive in the environment for five months or longer. The virus attacks the intestinal lining and results blood and fluid loss, as well as immune suppression.

Coronavirus is the second leading viral cause of diarrhea in puppies. It causes the small intestinal lining to die and can make puppies more susceptible to contracting parvovirus. This virus is highly contagious and is spread through the feces of infected dogs.

Adenovirus Type 2 is one of the causes of infectious tracheobronchitis or "kennel cough." The most common symptoms are dry, hacking cough followed by retching, and coughing up white foamy discharge. The cough is brought on by inflammation of the trachea and bronchi. Some dogs also get conjunctivitis or "pink eye," inflamed nasal mucous membranes, and nasal discharge.

Parainfluenza Virus is a highly contagious respiratory infection that is one of the causes of kennel cough. It can cause a moist or dry cough, fever, nasal discharge, lack of energy, and loss of appetite. These symptoms can vary in intensity. Dogs that were in groups as puppies are more susceptible to this virus.

Bordetella is the most common bacteria isolated from dogs with kennel cough. The most common symptom is a dry, hacking cough followed by retching. Many owners notice a honking cough and watery nasal discharge. Many times there is recent history of boarding or coming into contact with other dogs. In severe cases you may see pneumonia and death.

Leptospirosis is a bacteria that is carried by wild animals and spread in urine. Most dogs are exposed to Leptospirosis by contaminated water, urine, bite wounds, or ingestion of contaminated tissue. Symptoms vary from vomiting and diarrhea to joint and muscle pain, but severe cases can be fatal. Leptospirosis is also zoonotic.

Rabies is a viral infection spread in saliva that is fatal. This virus affects the nervous system. It can be carried by infected wild animals and spread to our pets, as well as humans. It is a state regulation that all dogs be vaccinated for rabies.