

Dog Fact Sheet

Vaccinations

Vaccinations are recommended for pups from 6 weeks of age against potentially fatal conditions. We are still seeing cases of parvovirus in the area, which can often result in affected individuals dying or having severe blood-stained diarrhoea and vomiting. Affected dogs often need intensive hospitalisation, with an uncertain outcome as the virus takes its course. The virus can survive for a long period in the environment but parvovirus is entirely preventable with vaccination.

Routine vaccination provides immunity against:

- **Canine distemper virus**
- **Hepatitis**
- **Parvovirus**
- **Parainfluenza virus**
- **Leptospirosis**

The primary course consists of 2 injections, ideally 4 weeks apart, often at 6 and 10 weeks of age. One further week (for full immunity) needs to elapse before the pup is then allowed out.

Annual booster vaccinations are recommended throughout the dog's life. These are combined with an examination and opportunity for you to discuss any concerns about your dog. This gives us the opportunity to detect any medical problems, even before you do, as signs may be subtle. Heart murmurs, for instance will only be detectable with a stethoscope. Early diagnosis of certain problems may often mean easier (and less expensive) treatments and may provide a better outlook long term.

Other vaccinations include:

Kennel cough-this vaccine is administered into the nose and lasts one year. If your dog is going to kennels while you are away, this vaccine is often a requirement.

Rabies vaccine-As the UK is free from Rabies, only travelling pets are required to have this vaccine. This will be an essential requirement for the Pet passport (PETS) scheme, which enables dogs to re-enter the UK without undergoing 6 months quarantine.

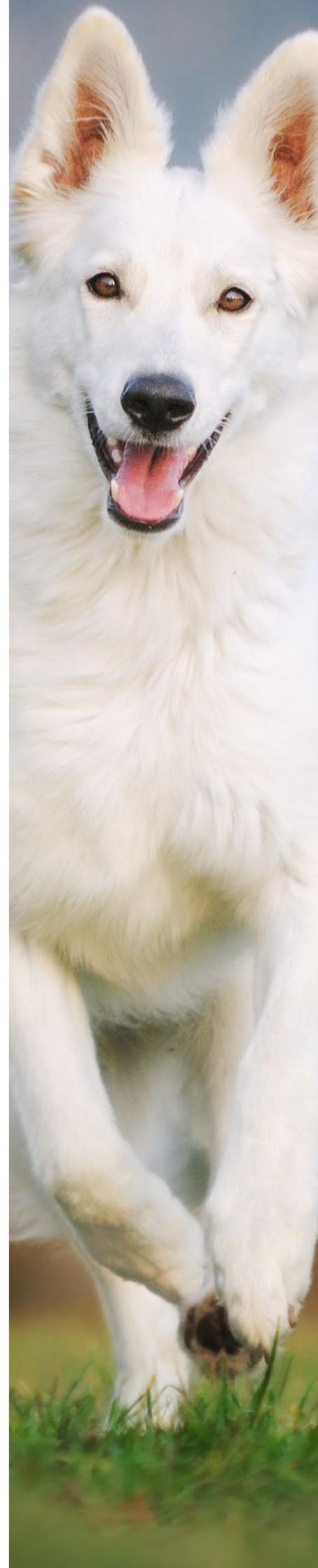
Safety of vaccines

Vaccination safety is always a serious consideration. We examine animals to ensure that they are fit and well at the time to minimise any potential problems. The vast majority of dogs show no adverse effects at all, but occasionally they can feel low for a day or so after vaccination. Rarely, a soft tissue swelling can develop at the site of injection, but will disappear with time. Generally, the benefits of vaccination greatly outweigh any adverse effects. (We vaccinate our own pets).

Worming

We recommend regular worming throughout your dog's life. Pups can be prone to problems from roundworms acquired from their mother via the placenta or milk. Infestations will produce a pot-bellied appearance, poor growth and even death from intestinal blockage. Transmission of *Toxocara* roundworms to people may occur and so from a public health point of view, worming is very important, (especially if there are any children in the household).

Worming is advised every 2-3 weeks up until 12 weeks old, then monthly until 6 months old, thereafter every 3 months, using good quality wormers available at the surgery.



Fleas, ticks and mites

Fleas

Fleas are very common in dogs (as well as cats, hedgehogs etc) , typically causing scratching and irritation. These small, but visible insects crawling through the coat will bite to take a small blood meal then reproduce, whereby the eggs drop to the floor and go through larval and pupal stages to develop into adults in your house.

Treatment involves dosing all sources (cats and dogs), washing bedding, hovering/ shampooing carpets etc and using a good household spray.

Ticks

Ticks are small blood-sucking parasites, usually picked up when out walking. Ticks typically climb up blades of grass looking for a suitable mammal to walk by then latch on to feed. This often causes irritation (and in certain areas of the country, can transmit certain diseases such as Lyme's disease).

Treatment involves removal (being careful not to leave their mouthparts attached) and use of appropriate tick treatments.

Mites

Various mites may live on dogs (eg ear mites, demodex mites and "walking dandruff" mites), but the most irritable is the sarcoptic mange mite, often carried by foxes as well as dogs. Irritation can be associated with the ears, elbows and hocks or can be more generalised.

Socialisation

Learning to socialise with people and other (well-behaved) dogs is encouraged from as early an age as possible, as this will help to prevent behavioural problems later in life.

We do offer puppy parties at the practice and encourage puppy classes and training locally to try to develop a well-rounded and obedient dog which will become your pride and joy, offering wonderful companionship for (hopefully) many years to come. A well-behaved pet will also make life easier for us at the surgery to be able to examine fully with minimal stress, and mean the veterinary advice and treatment can be optimised.

Choosing the right dog

As with all things, research into a particular breed of dog before buying/acquiring is advised. Your lifestyle may not be suitable for a particular breed or even to have a dog at all. Cats are currently the most popular pets as they are independent and happy to please themselves while you may be out all day at work.

Good dog breeders will have a wealth of information that they are only too pleased to pass on. They will be interested in where their pups will be going and often provide written information on feeding, general care and what treatment (worming, flea treatment and vaccinations) has been given. It is always good to see the mother and the rest of the litter in their home surroundings.

Enquire about Pedigrees and any tests or conditions (eg hip scores or eye tests) of the parents, which could be passed to the pups.

Many rescued adult dogs can make wonderful pets, however some have had a rough start and may continue to have difficult behaviours to control for the long term. The best rescue centres will have assessed their dogs for behavioural problems then vaccinated, neutered, microchipped, flea-treated and wormed their dogs.



Neutering

Spaying (ovariohysterectomy of female dog under general anaesthesia)

Reasons to spay-

- Prevent pregnancy and unwanted attention from male dogs
- Prevent false pregnancy signs-pregnancy behaviour and milk production
- Prevent pyometra (potentially life-threatening uterine infection after each season)
- Reduce the risk of mammary tumours and prevent reproductive tract tumours
- Treat reproductive tract problems
- Stabilise dogs with diabetes mellitus more easily

Disadvantages of spaying

- Requires surgery under a general anaesthetic with any associated complications, but this is a routine surgery and recovery times are usually quick
- Urinary incontinence later on in life is more common in spayed bitches, but often responds well to medical treatment if this does occur
- Weight gain is more likely, but controlled with diet
- The coat may change after neutering although this is not marked or common

Castration (removing the testes under a general anaesthetic)

Reasons to castrate

- Reduce behaviours such as excessive sexual urges, wandering, urine marking,
- (Aggression is a behavioural problem and will most often not be affected by castration)
- Prevent fertile breeding (though viable sperm in the tract may be present for some time after the operation).
- **Treat/prevent:** Testicular tumours, prostate enlargement, adenomas (benign tumours) of the anal ring

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Anal glands

All dogs have a pair of anal glands closely associated with the anal ring.

The glands fill with a pungent liquid and often empty naturally, usually when defaecating. Commonly, these glands do not empty and dogs will become irritated, either biting at the skin around the back legs or tail base or scooting their back sides on the floor.

Treatment involves manually emptying these glands and treating any associated infection.

Tests for breeding dogs

There are various tests available to assess your dog before breeding from them.

These are optional tests but are in the best interests of the breed to try and ensure that certain conditions are not passed onto subsequent generations.



Hip score

This assesses hip dysplasia in dogs. Each hip is assessed and given a number (up to 53 for each hip) after a panel of experts has assessed an X-Ray sent from the submitting practice. The lower the numbers, the better the hips. X-Rays need to be taken under a general anaesthetic and the dogs need to be over one year of age, with a microchip and kennel club registration documents. We are very experienced at taking suitable X-Rays for this scheme at the practice.

Elbow Dysplasia Scheme

Like hip scores, but less commonly performed, elbows can be assessed. Again, dogs will need to be over a year of age and a general anaesthetic is normally required to take the X-Rays. Scores are from 0-3 for each elbow and the lower the score, the better the elbows will be.

Eye Scheme

Eye scheme-these are done by ophthalmology specialists and we will refer you to a suitable specialist.

Genetic tests

There are many DNA/genetic tests now available. Please feel free to contact us for further information on any genetic test for any breed of dog.

