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Vaccinations

Do I need to vaccinate my pets?

Vaccination is essential to prevent against potentially life threatening diseases and this is why we strongly recommend it.

Do you still see the diseases?

Thankfully many of the most dangerous diseases are rarer now than they used to be but this is solely due to the use of effective vaccines. These diseases are still seen in unvaccinated animals. Stray dogs or cats are much more likely to carry these diseases and it is impossible to be sure you can prevent your pet from coming into contact with them or their urine/faeces.

Do vaccines really work?

Yes.

Are vaccines dangerous?

Every thing comes with a risk and vaccination is no different. However, it is important to understand that the risk of these side effects is very low - less than 1/20,000 - and the consequences of these are generally short lived and far less serious (similar to feeling faint or a sore arm in humans) than if any of the diseases mentioned are contracted.

How can I give less vaccine to my pet?

Protection against some of the diseases is not particularly long (like the flu vaccine in humans which is given yearly) so we do believe that annual vaccination is essential against some of the diseases such as leptospirosis in dogs and cat flu and leukaemia in cats.

It is possible to take blood samples from dogs to assess levels of immunity for 4 diseases (distemper, 2 types of adenovirus the cause of hepatitis and parvo) and from cats for feline enteritis, however this is expensive and will require a further visit to the surgery for vaccination should immunity to any of these diseases be low or marginal. For most of our clients we do not believe that this is a practical option as it involves extra expense and visits to the surgery for little or no benefit to their pet.

Why are annual examinations so important?

Pets live for an average of approximately 10-14 years and so age far faster than humans who can expect to live for around 60-70 years. Thus each annual examination is equivalent to seeing a Doctor every 6 or 7 years in a human. This enables the vet to examine your pet, advise you on preventative medicine or the treatment of diseases identified at an early stage and help answer any other concerns you may have.

Why are vaccines so expensive?

Vaccines are not expensive. At the annual vaccination we always include a clinical examination to make sure your pet is in good health, and of course we can advise you about any other problems that may arise. We believe that this is extremely good value when put against the cost, distress to the pet and potential loss of having to treat a dog or cat for a disease which is preventable by vaccination or a disease like cancer which when picked up in the early stages is treatable.