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Canine Vaccinations

Many people wonder, "What exactly is a DA₂PP-C vaccine?". Each letter abbreviates a viral or bacterial disease component that is found within the vaccine.

Distemper is a virus that is transmitted mostly through respiratory secretions. Within 2 weeks of contracting the virus an infected animal exhibits symptoms of respiratory illness (mostly sneezing and coughing) as well as possible diarrhea, vomiting, dehydration, loss of appetite, and debilitation. Later signs of the disease can include severe nervous system damage. Distemper is an incurable disease.

Hepatitis (Adenovirus type 2) is a viral disease. The virus is present in the environment. Infected dogs develop liver problems as well as other gastrointestinal problems such as lack of appetite, abdominal tenderness, lethargy, and diarrhea. Infected dogs can also develop major eye damage.

Parainfluenza is a viral disease that causes bronchitis and can lead to pneumonia. The most common sign of the disease is coughing.

Parvovirus is a very common viral disease. The virus is passed in the feces of infected animals for up to three weeks after recovery from the disease. The virus can remain in the environment for months to years. Young dogs are most susceptible and become ill within a few days of exposure. However, incubation can be as long as 2 to 3 weeks. Symptoms include massive vomiting and bloody diarrhea. Infected animals quickly dehydrate. If prompt medical attention is not received infected dogs usually do not survive.

Coronavirus is also a viral disease that causes vomiting and diarrhea. It is generally less deadly than parvovirus but still often requires medical attention.

Puppies receive their first vaccination for these diseases at 6 to 8 weeks of age. Subsequent vaccinations follow at 10 to 12 weeks and 14 to 16 weeks. Yearly boosters are given thereafter. (NOTE. IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT DOBERMANS AND ROTTWEILERS RECEIVE A FOURTH DA₂PP-C AT 20 WEEKS OF AGE.

Rabies is a viral disease that is incurable, fatal, and can be transmitted to humans. Illinois law requires dogs 16 weeks of age and older to receive a yearly rabies vaccine.