

# The oyal Treatment Veterinary Center

## Vaccine Information – What You Should Know

*When used judiciously, vaccines are effective in controlling diseases in populations. Vaccines have the potential to cause adverse effects and reactions as they stimulate and stress the immune system. This potential is why we will not vaccinate animals that are too young or too old; and we never vaccinate an animal that is ill.*

**Rabies Vaccine:** This is the only vaccine required by law in the state of Illinois. There are 3-year and 1-year vaccines available. These vaccines are identical except for their labels. The reason for this is that the first vaccine must be boosted after a year before it can last for 3 years. Once the first year is up, the animal can begin receiving 3-year rabies vaccinations.

**Distemper Combination Vaccine:** This vaccine is initially administered as a puppy (or kitten) series. It is then boosted at a year of age, or pets can have a vaccine titer (a blood test that checks for appropriate levels of immunity) to avoid having the vaccine given again. The vaccine lasts three years and is required by kennel facilities and dog parks. Some facilities will accept a vaccine titer as proof of vaccination.

## Preventive Medicine:

**Heartworm disease** is transmitted by mosquito bite. During the first 50-60 days the heartworms do not pose a threat. If Heartworm medication is administered monthly, it can prevent heartworms from maturing and embedding in the heart. Because the medication is retroactive, it should be given one month after exposure. We recommend giving the medication June through December. Continue to administer this medication if you plan on traveling to areas where there will be mosquito exposure (like Florida).

**Flea and Tick Control.** If there is a significant risk of fleas or ticks, there are several brands that have very few side effects. We recommend Frontline for routine use May through the end of October. If an animal not on prevention gets fleas, bathe off the flea dirt with a good shampoo (like Murphy Oil Soap), then use Frontline once monthly for 3 months, wash bedding and vacuum floors well. Ticks on an animal should be pulled off with slow deliberate tension. Do not use matches or chemicals. Make sure to check the tick to see if the head is still intact (they are very small). If you need help, or would like to identify the tick, contact your veterinarian. Identifying the tick can be useful to see if it is a carrier of a tick-borne disease.

**Bordatella:** Usually required by boarding facilities and kennels, it can be administered intranasally (preferred) in order to lessen the chance of your pet catching kennel cough. Depending on the facility, it will need to be administered every 6-12 months.

**Leptospirosis Vaccine:** Administered annually to animals living in congested urban areas with exposure to rats and rat urine (or other wildlife). We try to avoid administering this vaccine as we often see adverse reactions. Ask your veterinarian to assess your animal's risk of exposure to this disease.

Vaccines for **Giardia** are not necessary in this area and vaccines for **Corona** virus or **Lyme** are not recommended.