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Updated Vaccine Protocol for Cats and Dogs – February 2025

Dear Clients,

We appreciate the faith and trust you place in us to look after your beloved furry friends. As always, we strive to remain at the forefront of medical advances to be able to deliver the highest quality of medicine you have come to expect. Recently, the World Small Animal Veterinary Association (WSAVA) updated their vaccine guidelines. Based on their recent recommendations we are updating our vaccine policies to better align with the new recommendations.

If you have questions about these updates, please reach out to a member of our veterinary care team. During your appointment, your veterinarian will be happy to discuss with you about which vaccines are appropriate for your pet(s) based on age and lifestyle and answer any questions about the most recent update to the vaccine guidelines.

Thank you,

The Staff and Doctors at Chester Animal Clinic

Updated Vaccination Guidelines:

Dogs:

For puppies, we are *DECREASING* the number of recommended puppy visits. We are now advising puppies to start vaccines from 6 weeks of age with the distemper, parvovirus, and adenovirus (DHP) vaccine every 3 weeks until they are 16 weeks old (formerly 19-20 weeks) as part of the core vaccine series. The DHP vaccine will need to be boosted at 6 months of age. There after the DHP vaccine is given once every 3 years for life. Rabies should be given between the ages of 12-16 weeks of age; it is also a core vaccine. Rabies will need to be boosted at 1 year from the initial vaccination and then need to be updated every 3 years for life. Leptospirosis has been made a core vaccine (previously a lifestyle vaccine) due to the prevalence in our area. It is given as a 2 dose vaccine series separated by 3 weeks. It is then given annually for life. Bordetella, Lyme, and canine influenza virus (CIV) are still considered lifestyle vaccines.

Dogs (cont.):

Lyme and the canine influenza vaccines are given as a 2-dose series and can be started as young as 8 weeks of age. Both vaccines need to be repeated in 3 weeks. Thereafter the vaccines are given on an annual basis. New research has shown that the bordetella vaccine when given orally only needs to be given once as part of the initial vaccination process. The injectable version of the bordetella vaccine needs to be given as part of a 2-dose series given 3 weeks apart. Both the oral and injectable forms need to be given every 6 months for dogs in high-risk environments (such as boarding, daycare and grooming facilities).

The updated vaccine guidelines for puppies older than 16 weeks and adult dogs starting vaccines are as follows: DHP is given as a 2-dose series separated by 3 weeks. The DHP vaccine should be updated every 3 years for life. Rabies should be given once the first year. It should then be updated every 3 years for life. Leptospirosis should be given as a 2-dose series, given 3 weeks apart. Leptospirosis should then be given annually for life. Bordetella is given as previously described, as a single (oral) or 2 dose (injectable) series separated by 3 weeks and updated bi-annually as long as the dog is at risk. Lyme and CIV should be given as previously described, as a 2-dose series separated by 3 weeks and then updated annually as long as the dog is at risk.

Cats:

For kittens we are also *DECREASING* the number of recommended kitten visits. We are now advising kittens to start vaccines from 6 weeks of age with the feline herpes, panleukopenia, and calicivirus (FVRCP/feline distemper) vaccine every 3 weeks of age until they are 16 weeks old (formerly 19-20 weeks) as part of the core vaccine. Once kittens are 6 months of age, the FVRCP vaccine should be boosted. Then, the FVRCP vaccine is given every 3 years for life. Rabies should be given between the ages of 12-16 weeks of age; it is also a core vaccine. Rabies will then need to be updated annually for life.

Feline leukemia virus (FeLV) is considered both a core and lifestyle vaccine. FeLV is a core vaccine for all kittens 8 weeks of age and older. It is given as 2-dose series given 3 weeks apart. FeLV vaccination should be given to all indoor/outdoor cats annually thereafter. For kittens over 16 weeks old and adults with an unknown vaccination history the vaccine guidelines are as follows: the FVRCP should be given as 2 dose vaccine series given 3 weeks apart. The FVRCP should then be updated every 3 years. FeLV should be given as 2-dose series given 3 weeks apart. Rabies is given as a single dose series and then updated annually. FeLV is then given once annually as previously advised for cats considered at risk.