



The Canine Leptospirosis & Canine Influenza Vaccines

Canine Influenza (H3N8)

- Canine Influenza is a new viral disease of dogs that was first seen in 2004 in racing greyhounds in Florida and has since spread to 30 states including Massachusetts.
- 100% of dogs that are exposed to the virus will become infected and 80% will become sick with the flu. Although most dogs develop a mild form of disease which is similar to flu in humans, some will develop a much more severe form and need to be hospitalized for high fevers and pneumonia, and as many as 8% may die from this illness. Young and old are affected alike, at any time of the year.
- Good news! A vaccine has been developed for Canine Influenza that decreases the severity of disease and decreases viral shedding. The vaccine is safe for dogs over the age of six weeks. Initial vaccination is followed by a booster in 2-4 weeks and then is repeated yearly. The vaccine is very safe, but as with any vaccine, there is slight risk of a vaccine reaction.
- You should consider vaccinating your dog if they go to a kennel, groomer, doggy daycare, dog show or dog park. You should also vaccinate your dog if they or their doggie friends travel to NY, NJ, PA, CO or FL. Greyhounds tend to get more severe disease.

Leptospirosis

- Leptospirosis is a bacterial disease that can occur in livestock, wildlife, rodents, dogs and people. Most canine cases of Leptospirosis occur between July and November, often 3 months after heavy rainfall.
- Wildlife and rodents are the main source of the disease, contaminating soil, puddles, lakes and rivers with their infected urine. Dogs can become infected by drinking contaminated water or directly through breaks in the skin.
- Once the disease enters the body it can result in life threatening infections of the liver and kidneys, eye disease and abortion of pregnant animals. With aggressive treatment many dogs survive; but can have permanent kidney damage. Lepto can be fatal.
- Good news! There is a vaccine against 4 of the strains of Lepto that make dogs sick. The vaccine can be given to dogs over 12 weeks of age. Initial vaccination is followed by a booster in 2-4 weeks and then is repeated yearly. The vaccine is best given in the spring so that dogs are best protected during “Lepto season”. Unfortunately, there are three additional strains for which there is no vaccine available. The vaccine is safe but, as with any vaccine, there is a small risk of vaccine reaction. Some dogs may experience a low-grade fever or local soreness the day after receiving this vaccine. Rarely, a more serious reaction may occur.
- In addition to vaccination these are some ways to help prevent Lepto in your dog:
 - Keep rodents under control and out of your dog food
 - Place all dog food in a sealed plastic bin
 - Keep your dog away from ponds, puddles or other standing water
 - Keep your garbage covered
 - Don't feed your pets outside
 - Wash outdoor water bowls daily with solution of 1 part bleach to 10 parts water