



VACCINATION PROTOCOL

for Puppies

By Dr. Ricia Walker

- 8 weeks of age - 1st vaccination
Distemper/Adeno2/Parainfluenza/Parvovirus
- 12 weeks of age - 2nd vaccination
Distemper/Adeno2/Parainfluenza/Parvovirus/Leptospirosis
- 16 weeks of age - 3rd vaccination
Distemper/Adeno2/Parainfluenza/Parvovirus/Leptospirosis
Rabies vaccine

Contrary to popular belief, there is no magic "puppy series" of vaccines. The number and frequency of vaccines given to puppies is based on age and the status of their immune system. When puppies are born, they receive colostrum from their mother in the first two days of nursing which gives the puppies a passive immunity. In other words, everything that she is

immune to, the puppies will be too. If mom has had a good vaccination history, she will convey her immunities to everything she has been vaccinated for to her babies. These maternal antibodies start to sharply decline in the puppies when they are 8 weeks old. At this point, we begin their vaccinations.

If the mother has not been vaccinated or if her vaccination status is unknown (in the case of a stray), it is recommended to start vaccinations at 6 weeks of age. However, this is the *only* time that this is recommended.

If the mother has been vaccinated, starting vaccinations before 8 weeks can actually create what is called a "viral window". The vaccine can be completely overridden by the maternal antibodies, or the two can cancel each other out leaving the puppy exposed to these deadly diseases.

Under the age of 16 weeks, a puppy's immune system is immature, and can only hold onto the immunity from a vaccine for about a month. So, we vaccinate once a month until the puppy's immune system is mature at 16 weeks of age. At this point, the puppy will respond as an adult animal and hold onto the immunity for a period of a year when the vaccines should be boosted.

If a puppy is over the age of 16 weeks when their vaccines are started, they should receive two of the Distemper/Parvo/Lepto combo vaccines a minimum of two weeks apart, and one Rabies vaccine.