

# Vaccination Protocols for Home Boarding and Day Care

## The DEFRA Guidance

Condition 9.4 for the guidance for Home Boarding states that

***“All reasonable precautions must be taken to prevent and control the spread among the animals and people of infectious diseases, pathogens and parasites”***

The Guidance: *Primary vaccination courses must be completed at least 2 weeks before boarding.*

This is to ensure that the vaccine has had long enough to take effect and provide the dog with adequate immunisation cover. This is especially important in puppies, and is why vets advocate not letting dogs out into public places where there are unvaccinated dogs until after this 2 week period. This is also an important rule to follow if vaccinating against kennel cough, as sometimes the vaccine can trigger very mild symptoms in a newly vaccinated dog -which can then be passed on, if they cough/sneeze.

*The Guidance: An up-to-date veterinary vaccination record must be seen to ensure that dogs have current vaccinations against canine parvovirus, canine distemper, canine adenovirus/infectious canine hepatitis, leptospirosis and other relevant diseases. Vaccination against other diseases such as kennel cough (Bordetella bronchiseptica/ Canine parainfluenza virus) may be required by the establishment.*

The current vaccination protocol recommended for dogs in the UK is 2 primary vaccinations 2 – 4 weeks apart, with the second vaccination not before they are 10 weeks of age. The full vaccination should be boosted 12 months after the primary course. The first 14 months of life are the highest risk for any dog, but even a vaccinated dog is more at risk from infectious disease during this time. After this time the main vaccine is repeated only every 3 years. Cover against Leptospirosis has been shown to dip quickly after the 12 months and therefore annual vaccination is still recommended for this.

It is up to each establishment as to whether you ask for kennel cough vaccination or not. If you have multiple dogs visiting and a regular change-over of dogs in your care with day care and boarding, the higher the risk of infection being passed around the dogs.

*The Guidance: Certification from a veterinarian of a recent protective titre test may be accepted instead of a booster vaccination as required by the establishment. The certificate must state that it is valid for the current period of boarding. It is the decision of the home boarder whether to accept such a certificate.*

Titre testing is a means to assess the antibody levels of a particular individual's blood. Unfortunately, this doesn't accurately indicate their overall immunity or level of protection against disease. The blood tests would only tell the antibody levels at the time of sampling, not in 1, 2 or 6 months time. A dog would need titre testing for Parvo Virus, Adeno Virus, Distemper and Leptospirosis.

**Vaccinations have a very high safety margin and there is overwhelming evidence to show both individual and population benefits. There are of course cases of vaccine reactions which are brought to the attention of the public, but these are far outweighed by the levels of disease prevention, which of course is not mentioned on public forums or outside of the veterinary research world.**

*The Guidance: Homoeopathic vaccination is not acceptable.*

You may take your dog to the vet annually to have vaccinations, but this does not mean that they are being given all boosters at every visit. Each vaccination has a different expiry period (or shelf life) and your vet will only give your dog the required boosters in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations.

If you have any questions about your dog's vaccinations it is important to talk to your vet. Your vet can give you guidance which is specific to your dog's age, lifestyle and medical status. Vaccinations or titer testing are required in order for you to use the services of a licensed home boarder.

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