



Canine Preventative Care Recommendations

Here at HVH we have established a high standard of care and, in doing so, are now recommending a more comprehensive approach to preventative care for your dog. During appointments, we understand this information can be a bit overwhelming. To assist with this, we are providing you with the following list of recommendations in regards to preventative care for your pet.

We look forward to working with you and your furry family to give them the best quality of care.

We are always happy to discuss this information further, so please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

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Preventative Care Recommendations

BIANNUAL EXAMS

Dogs age much faster than humans, which is why we've found that annual exams are sometimes not enough to ensure the maximum benefits of veterinary care. We strongly encourage consideration of the twice-a-year exam schedule for your pet, especially as they enter into adulthood. What this means going forward is that you will receive a reminder every 6 months to schedule a biannual wellness exam. This is also an effective way of separating out yearly preventative care, with one exam focusing on prophylactic care such as vaccines and heartworm/flea/tick preventatives, and the second on proactive diagnostics such as 4dx testing, wellness bloodwork, and fecal testing. Biannual exams can also be a great way to get your pet more accustomed to veterinary visits.

VACCINATIONS

Vaccinations are an absolutely crucial element of veterinary care. They are divided into two groups: core and non-core. The core vaccines are the immunizations we encourage for all dogs, while the non-core vaccines are encouraged on a situational basis.

CORE:

- **Rabies:** The rabies virus is a fatal infection of the neurologic system that is transmissible to all mammals, including humans. It is required by law to vaccinate every domestic pet against rabies.
- **DHPP:** Commonly referred to as the "Distemper" vaccine, this is a combo vaccine, protecting your dog against Distemper, Hepatitis, Parainfluenza, and Parvovirus. Distemper is a severe viral infection of the respiratory, digestive, and neurologic systems that in most cases results in death. Hepatitis is a progressive viral infection that can lead to irreversible liver damage. Parainfluenza is a highly contagious respiratory virus that can progress to a very severe cough. Lastly, Parvovirus is a viral infection of the digestive system that primarily affects puppies and can cause severe vomiting and diarrhea; it is highly contagious and often fatal.

- **Bordetella:** Commonly referred to as “kennel cough,” the *Bordetella* vaccine protects against a cough derived from a combination of viral and bacterial agents that ranges from mild and self-limiting to severe pneumonia. This vaccine is particularly important for dogs that have frequent contact with other dogs, such as in boarding, grooming, or doggy-daycare settings.
- **Lyme:** Lyme disease is a bacterial infection transmitted by ticks that, if left untreated, can lead to chronic infection. The disease causes joint inflammation, inappetence, and lameness. More serious complications include damage to the kidneys and in rare instances, the nervous system. The vaccine is imperative for dogs that live in areas where the deer tick thrives, like New Hampshire.
- **Leptospirosis:** Leptospirosis is a bacterial infection that primarily affects the kidneys and liver, and can be fatal. The disease is communicable to humans and very easy to transmit. The bacteria that cause infection are spread via the urine of woodland animals like deer and rodents. Leptospirosis is very common in NH, which is why we are now considering it a core vaccine.

NON-CORE:

- **Canine Influenza:** Canine influenza causes symptoms similar to those of kennel cough and human influenza, such as cough, runny nose, and fever. Luckily, this is not common in our area, though a vaccine does exist for those at high risk.

ANNUAL DIAGNOSTICS

External exams can only reveal so much about your pet’s health. Diagnostics are a crucial part of even the healthiest animal’s annual check-up.

- **4dx Testing:** A simple blood-based screening test for heartworm disease and several tick-borne pathogens (Lyme, Ehrlichia, and Anaplasma).
- **Wellness Bloodwork:** Annual bloodwork in the form of a chemistry panel and complete blood count allows us to view trends in critical values such as liver and kidney function. It also sets a baseline so we can better assist your pet should they become ill. Most imperatively, bloodwork can assist in early detection of abnormalities or disease processes.

- **Fecal Testing:** Some intestinal parasites do not manifest symptoms right away and many of the common parasites (such as giardia, roundworm, and hookworm) are zoonotic, meaning they are transmissible to humans. They are also contagious to other pets. Fecal testing is crucial for early detection, allowing for easier and more effective treatment.

YEAR-ROUND HEARTWORM PREVENTATION

Dogs are the natural hosts for heartworm. As its name suggests, heartworm disease causes lasting damage to the heart, lungs, and arteries, and can affect a dog's health and quality of life long after the parasites are gone. It is a disease that has been diagnosed in all 50 states, and is becoming increasingly prevalent. The vector of transmission for heartworm disease is a mosquito; and here in the seacoast area, mosquitoes have been found to linger far longer throughout the year. Due to this, we encourage year-round usage of a heartworm preventative.

At HVH, we offer two safe, effective brands:

- ***ProHeart***: An FDA-approved injectable preventative that provides 6 months of continuous prevention in a single dose.
- ***Interceptor Plus***: A chewable tablet given once a month that protects your dog against heartworms and several types of intestinal parasites (roundworms, hookworms, tapeworms and whipworms).

YEAR-ROUND FLEA AND TICK PREVENTATION

Fleas and ticks can cause animals and people discomfort and potential disease. Ingestion of flea eggs can lead to tapeworm infection and flea bites can lead to severe skin irritation and hair loss.

While ticks do not cause immediate discomfort following a bite, they can carry serious diseases such as Lyme, Ehrlichia, and Anaplasma. Prevention against fleas and ticks is the most cost-effective and health-conscious method of avoiding these complications.

At HVH, we carry several safe and effective products for dogs:

- ***Bravecto***: An oral OR topical flea/tick preventative that lasts for 12 weeks (3 months) per chew.