

## Why Vaccinate Rabbits?

Rabbits are susceptible to two infectious diseases for which we can vaccinate. Both diseases are a killer of rabbits. They are myxomatosis and viral haemorrhagic disease (VHD).



### Myxomatosis:

This is a viral infection that affects all rabbits. Clinical signs include puffy swelling around the eyes, head, anus and genitalia. Death often follows. The virus is spread by blood sucking insects such as fleas and mosquitoes. Vaccination is the only way to protect your rabbit against this fatal disease.

### Viral haemorrhagic disease (VHD):

This is also a viral infection which cause hepatitis and bleeding from the nose, mouth and anus. Rabbits can die suddenly or be found

## WHAT DO I NEED TO DO?

Myxomatosis vaccination requires a single dose of vaccine in rabbits over 6 weeks of age and a single booster vaccination once a year. As the disease predominates in the summer it is best to revaccinate in May/June. If an outbreak occurs during the winter times then a booster after 6 months is advisable.

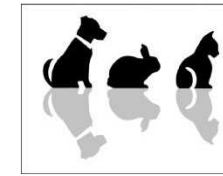
VHD vaccination only requires a single dose of vaccine in rabbits over 10 weeks of age and a single booster vaccination once a year to maintain immunity against this nasty disease.

## Do our pets really need annual vaccinations?

Yes they do. Vaccines stimulate the production of antibodies and therefore protect against a future viral infection. After a vaccination the immune levels reach a peak and then begin to decline. For most vaccines, the level of protection after a year may no longer be at a sufficient level to protect your pet. Some vaccines last longer than a year, such as Rabies (3 years) and Parvovirus (3 years).

There is some opinion at the moment that pets do not require annual boosters and that vaccination can cause more illnesses than they prevent. Be assured, there is no documented evidence to support this.

Whilst there can be rare occasions when animal has an adverse reaction to a vaccination—as can happen in humans, these instances are extremely uncommon.



**RAINSBROOK  
VETERINARY  
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**Vaccinations for  
dogs, cats and rabbits**



**RAINSBROOK  
VETERINARY  
GROUP**

83 High Street, Hillmorton, Rugby.

Tel: 01788 542221

1 Craven Road, Rugby.

Tel: 01788 562844

12 Upper Grove Street, Leamington Spa.

Tel: 01926 422592

[www.rainsbrookvets.co.uk](http://www.rainsbrookvets.co.uk)



## Why Vaccinate Dogs?

Dogs are susceptible to a number of killer diseases for which vaccination is available.

The diseases are: distemper, infectious canine hepatitis, parvovirus, leptospirosis and parainfluenza virus. Let us consider each of these individually.



### Distemper:

Distemper is caused by an airborne virus. Initially it causes a high temperature, dullness, coughing, vomiting, diarrhoea and thickening of the pads (hence the old name Hardpad). Most dogs recover from this phase, which usually lasts for about a week. However this disease has a sting in the tail. About 50% of cases develop nervous symptoms a week after recovery. Unfortunately there is no treatment and the nervous signs progress. The only humane course of action is to put the dog to sleep. Vaccination protects the dog.

### Infectious Canine Hepatitis:

This is another potentially fatal airborne virus, which attacks the liver causing a high temperature, dullness, abdominal pain and jaundice. The virus can also attack very young puppies as dogs under one year are at greatest risk, resulting in the death of the whole litter. Protection can be given through vaccination.

### Parvovirus:

Parvovirus is a viral disease that attacks the gut lining. The dog can literally bleed to death internally. This hardy virus is transmitted via infected faeces. Fluid therapy is sometimes successful but some dogs still die, especially puppies. Vaccination again is the key.

### Leptospirosis:

Leptospirosis can be caused by one of two bacteria: (1) *Leptospira canicola* is a dog infection of the kidneys and infection is passed from dog to dog via contaminated urine. Affected cases run a high temperature and show signs of kidney infection. (2) *Leptospira icterohaemorrhagiae* is transmitted by contact with rat urine or rat infested water. The infection rapidly takes hold causing liver or kidney infection or both. Despite being a bacterial infection, antibiotics are a little value with a high proportion of cases dying before the antibiotics can take effect.

### Parainfluenza infection:

This is a viral infection and causes a mild kennel-type cough and is contagious. The vaccination covers this disease.

### WHAT DO I NEED TO DO?

Your dog or puppy should receive 2 doses of a combination vaccine two weeks apart initially. Puppies are usually vaccinated at 8 and 10 weeks of age. The vaccine is 100% effective for the above diseases. After this, your dog requires a single combined dose of vaccine once a year.

### Kennel Cough:

This may be caused by a bacterium called *Bordetella bronchiseptica*. It causes a particularly harsh cough resulting in retching and vomiting. It is highly contagious and severely debilitating. This bug can be protected against using an intranasal vaccine which will provide protection for 12 months. It is usually given at least 72 hours prior to going into kennels.

## Why Vaccinate Cats?



Cats are susceptible to a number of killer diseases for which vaccination is available. The diseases are: feline infectious enteritis, two forms of cat flu (calicivirus and herpes virus) and feline leukaemia virus.

### Feline infectious enteritis:

This is a viral disease that attacks the gut lining. The cat can literally bleed to death internally. Fluid therapy may save the cat, but vaccination is the best form of protection.

### Cat flu (calicivirus & herpes virus):

Both viruses cause the classic signs of cat flu with runny eyes, nasal discharge and mouth ulcers. The vaccine will protect against both of these.

### Feline Leukaemia virus:

This kills more cats than any other single disease. The clinical signs can vary from a susceptibility to other infections to tumours in various parts of the body either as a kitten or later on in life. This virus is easily spread in saliva and blood as can easily be transmitted via sharing food bowls, grooming each other or fighting. As there is no cure, vaccination is the only way to protect them.

### WHAT DO I NEED TO DO?

Your cat or kitten should receive 2 doses of a combination vaccine 3 weeks apart initially to provide 100% cover for the diseases mentioned above. Kittens are usually vaccinated at 9 or 12 weeks of age. After this your pet requires a single dose of the combined vaccine once a year.