

Leptospirosis

The official WSAVA recommendations for this vaccine are set out below. It is not a Core Vaccine but most veterinary surgeon would recommend an annual booster.

It can be given without the Core DHP vaccines we have tested for.

It is available in the UK as L4 with 4 different serogroups or L2 with just 2 serogroups

We cannot test with the vacci-check kits for antibodies to leptospirosis as it does not produce long lasting immunity or antibodies. **If you feel your pet is at risk** it should be repeated annually.

If diagnosed early it is treatable with antibiotics but it is a serious illness. Read carefully before deciding not to have the vaccine.

WSAVA Vaccination Guidelines 2015 Full Version

Non-core. Leptospira vaccines have been developed to account for the known circulating pathogenic sero-groups in different geographical areas. Note that Leptospira serogroups may include multiple sero- vars. There is often confusion with the use of the terms 'serogroup' and 'serovar'. Vaccination should be restricted to use in geographical areas where a risk of exposure has been established or for dogs whose lifestyle places them at risk. This vaccine is known to provide protection that is less robust and may be of shorter duration, and therefore these products must be administered annually [EB1].

Also available in the USA and some other countries with serogroups grippityphosa and pomona, in Europe with serogroups grippityphosa and australis, and in Europe with serogroup grippityphosa.

Two doses 2–4 weeks apart

Annually

In the past, Leptospira bacterin vaccines have been suggested to be linked to a higher prevalence of allergic adverse events – particularly in small breed dogs. The evidence base for this is low [EB4] and one published study indicates no greater risk from Leptospira bacterins (Moore et al. 2005) [EB1]. The European Consensus Statement on Leptospirosis

Leptospirosis know the risks

Leptospirosis (lepto) is a bacterial infection with some 200 different variants (serovars). The vaccine contains 2 or 4 strains. The risk of your pet contracting leptospirosis is dependent on three factors: climate, geographic area and lifestyle.

A leptospirosis vaccine is usually given to your dog at the SAME time as either a DHP or DHPPi vaccine, commonly called a “booster” or annual vaccination. The leptospirosis part of the vaccine is a liquid and is given this way to act as a dilutant for the powder form of DHP/DHPPi. Saline solution can be used instead.

Because of this combination it is IMPOSSIBLE to isolate which part of the vaccine has caused an adverse reaction should your pet suffer one. This practise MUST cease – it allows manufacturers to evade their responsibilities. The vaccine needs to be given at a

separate time and in isolation. ANY adverse reaction should be reported to the VMD and if your vet won't do it, then do it yourself. <https://www.vmd.defra.gov.uk/adversereactionreporting/>

The vaccine does NOT prevent your pet from catching leptospirosis. The vaccine is designed to REDUCE shedding of the bacteria in an INFECTED animal, because the disease is zoonotic and can be transferred to humans. Read the Summary of Product Characteristics leaflets. However, it is NOT a notifiable disease. Sewer workers in the UK aren't given this vaccine due to the side effects so why should we give it to our pets? It's perfectly treatable with antibiotics (doxycycline).

If your pet remains unvaccinated it carries one risk of catching leptospirosis. If you decide to vaccinate it carries two – firstly of catching the disease and secondly of suffering from an adverse reaction which can be either fatal or life limiting requiring often very expensive veterinary care.

The incidence of leptospirosis in the UK is VERY rare, with most human cases in the UK being contracted in foreign climates. See Gideon's Year Book – it records bacterial infection worldwide.

A peer reviewed research paper by Christopher Ball at the Liverpool University Veterinary School sponsored by MSD manufacturer of Nobivac/Canigen to show how prevalent leptospirosis was in the rodent population in the UK was published. Do google and read it: it failed.

Leptospirosis is difficult to isolate. It does not survive on dry land and your dog would have to swim in a pond or drink water just after a rodent excreted it. It is also difficult to test for, with two tests available:

1) MAT test. Once vaccinated, the patient's serum can no longer be a useful record for diagnostic tests, as the serum antibody titre from the vaccine cannot be distinguished from antibody caused by natural infection.

2) PCR test. Effective testing is now done via the PCR DNA test ; the actual organism is retrieved from either blood or urine.

If your vet tells you that there have been recently diagnosed cases in your area be sure to ask which serovar was confirmed – it may not even be one included in the vaccine.

More Information

https://www.naturalpetcare.co.uk/resources/Documents/NewPuppyOwnerVaccinationGuidelinesMay2013_0WEB-1.pdf

<https://naturalpetcare.co.uk/medicine/vaccination/>

http://holisticvet.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/WSAVA_VGG_2010_Guidelines.pdf