



## **Know Why Your Pet is Here!** **~Vaccine Edition~**



### **Why do we vaccinate?**

Vaccination is the most common procedure performed in veterinary medicine and for good reason. Vaccines stimulate the immune system, which helps protect against some of the most common and some of the most serious diseases found in dogs. Vaccine technology has continued to improve on the effectiveness of vaccines while at the same time making them safer. We consider vaccination to be medical procedure that is an important part of your dogs overall health care.

### **What diseases do we vaccinate against?**

It is important to know that a “Distemper” vaccine is not only Distemper but rather a combination of different vaccines. A routine “distemper” vaccination at Cottonwood Veterinary Center includes **DHPP** or **DHLPP** and contains four or five different components.

**D** – Distemper: A potentially fatal virus that attacks the lungs and affects the function of the brain and spinal chord.

**H** – Hepatitis: A virus that affects the liver and can cause the loss of vision.

**L** – Leptospirosis: A bacteria that can cause kidney and liver failure.

**P** – Parvovirus: An often-fatal virus that attacks the lining of the intestinal tract, bone marrow and damages the heart.

**P** – Parainfluenza: A virus causing respiratory disease resulting in coughing.

**Rabies** vaccine is required by law as it results in a fatal infection of the nervous system in both dogs and people.

### **How often does your pet need to be vaccinated?**

Because of their vulnerable immune systems, puppies are given a series of 3 or 4 ‘distemper’ vaccines every 3 weeks starting around 6 weeks and ending at 4 months of age. A dog starting a vaccine series after 4 months of age will require a series of two ‘distemper’ vaccines no more than 4 weeks apart to assure an adequate immune response. Once a dog has gone through an initial vaccine series a booster is given at one year and then every 3 years thereafter with the exception of leptospirosis, which is only effective for one year. Rabies is given once starting at about 12 to 16 weeks of age, boosted one year later and then every 3 years thereafter depending on local law.

### **Can vaccines harm your pet?**

Like any medical procedure, vaccines are not without potential adverse effects. Fortunately, these adverse reactions affect only a small percentage of dogs. Most common adverse effects are generally mild and include fever, lethargy and decreased appetite. More serious adverse effects include allergic reactions to vaccines resulting in facial swelling, hives, breathing difficulty, and/or vomiting and diarrhea.

### **Why do we require an exam prior to administration of vaccines.**

We at Cottonwood Veterinary Center strive to ensure quality care for your pet and believe a thorough exam is the best way to assure your pet to be an appropriate candidate to receive a vaccination.