

are in fact boosted where there is an increased risk of exposure, for example vaccination against 'flu or polio.

What is included in the cost of the vaccination?

What is being paid for is a full professional consultation in addition to the cost of vaccination. When you bring your pet to be vaccinated we will not only administer a number of doses of vaccine but we will also perform a thorough health examination. In order to ensure the continued well-being of your pet, regular preventative health checks are essential. We use the opportunity to discuss other aspects of pet healthcare, such as worming, flea control, dental care, diet, etc.

I have heard vaccines can cause side effects, is this true?

Serious side effects following vaccinations are extremely rare. Although all veterinary vaccines undergo thorough, independent evaluation of their safety, efficacy and quality, it is impossible to guarantee that any product will be safe and effective in every individual case. It must be remembered, though, that the very small risk of a vaccine side effect is greatly outweighed by the benefit of protection against serious disease.

Homeopathic vaccines, what about them?

The main concern most vets have about their use is that there is no proper independent evidence to show that they work by preventing disease. Indeed, the few properly designed trials that have been carried out by using homeopathic nosodes have shown no evidence of protection. Without evidence of effectiveness, homeopathic nosodes may pose far greater risk by leaving pets susceptible to disease.

What are 'live' vaccines and why are they used?

As the name suggests, these vaccines contain live strains which have been specially modified to prevent them from causing disease, thereby ensuring safety for the vaccinated animals as well as for unvaccinated 'in-contact' animals. Live vaccines give a rapid onset of protection and they provide better stimulation of the immune system and give longer lasting protection.

Only healthy animals should be vaccinated; why is this and what are the risks to an unhealthy pet?

So that your pet's immune system can respond to the vaccine properly it is important that your pet is healthy and therefore it is essential that we carry out a health examination before vaccinating your pet.

When faced with an animal with long-term disease such as heart disease or diabetes, most vets will advise that vaccination should be continued. There is no evidence that such animals fail to respond or are at greater risk of problems and in-fact they are more likely to succumb to natural infection if they are not vaccinated.

Why do all dogs get the same vaccine dose, irrespective of size, or breed?

When we give drugs such as antibiotics or wormers, the effect depends on achieving a certain concentration of the active ingredient in the body of the animal and, for this reason the larger the body mass, the greater the total

amount needed to achieve the required dose level. However, vaccination doesn't work like this, when we give a dose of vaccine what we are doing is giving a dose sufficient to stimulate the body's immune system to generate a protective immune response. The immune system in fact requires the same degree of stimulus irrespective of the body mass or breed, therefore we need to use exactly the same dose of vaccine for a Chihuahua as for a Great Dane!