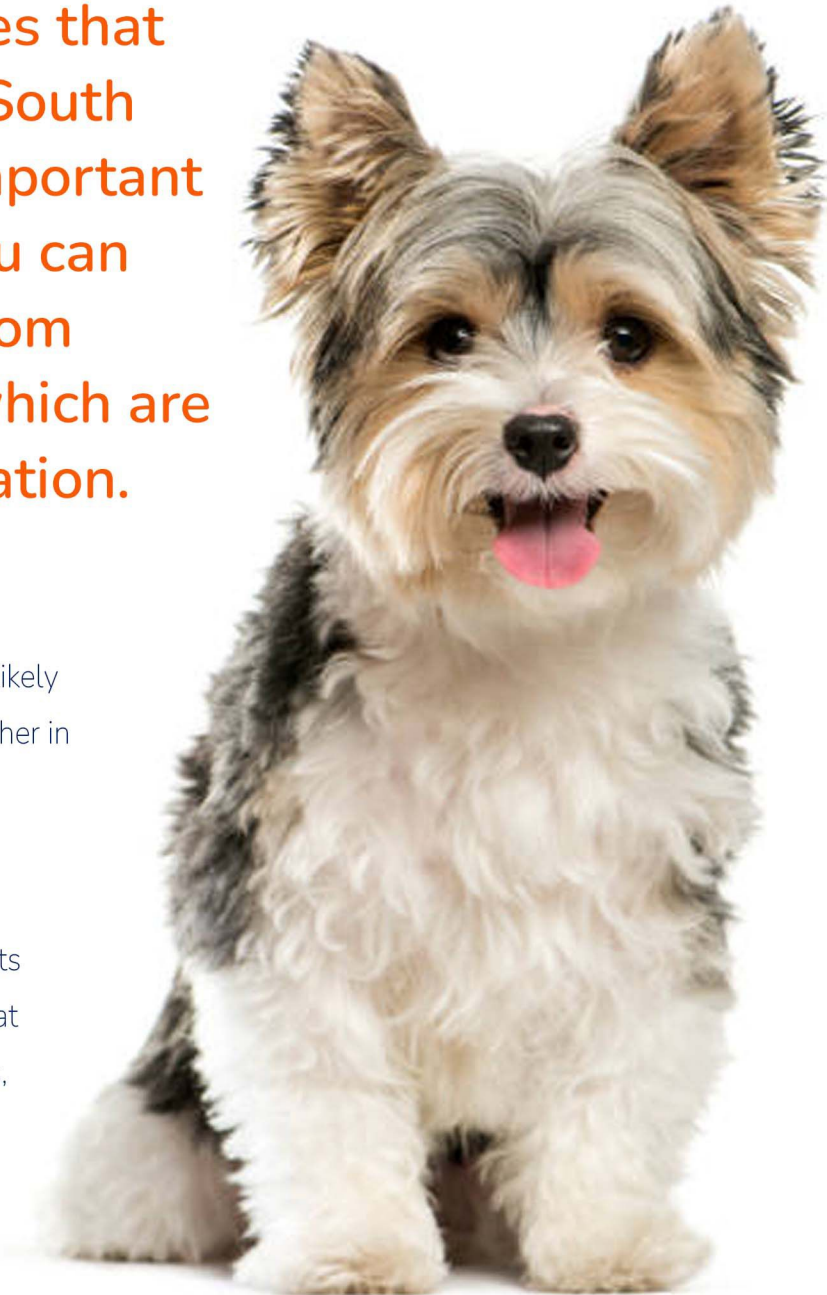


Pet Vaccinations

Viral and bacterial diseases that make pets sick are rife in South Africa. One of the most important preventative measures you can take to protect your pet from these diseases, some of which are potentially fatal, is vaccination.

Pets love to explore their surroundings and are very likely to come into contact with an infectious disease, whether in an airborne state or through bodily fluids via direct contact with a sick animal or contaminated surfaces.

During such an encounter, the immune system mounts a response to protect the pet against the diseases that may cause an infection. However, during this process, the animal usually becomes ill and, sometimes, the infection is too serious for it to fight it off.



Vaccinations not only benefit an individual animal, they help to protect the whole community. The fewer pets that are vaccinated, the more susceptible they are to illnesses and the more prevalent the diseases are.

Pet Vaccinations



Vaccines introduce an altered version of these diseases to safely stimulate this response and teach the immune system to recognise the infectious agents in the future. This means that, if your pet encounters the disease itself, the immune system is ready to respond and fight it off, without becoming seriously ill. A healthy pet with a strong immune system is required to build these protective antibodies.

There is no cure for most disease against which we vaccinate our pets. Veterinary treatment largely supports the animal in the hope that their immune system can overcome the infection before it succumbs to the effects of the disease. The aim of vaccination is to prevent your pet from being in this situation.

The Role of the Immune System

A pet's immune system plays a huge role in how it reacts to vaccinations. Fortunately, there are several steps that you can take to enhance their immune system and ensure that vaccines work best.

- Stick to the vaccination protocol.
- If your pet has not had the puppy or kitten vaccinations at the appropriate times, you can still bring them in to be vaccinated at any age.
- Ensure that your pet follows a healthy diet and adheres to its deworming schedule.
- Protect your pet against external parasites (like fleas, ticks, and mosquitoes that can spread harmful illnesses), as well as internal parasites (like roundworms, hookworms, tapeworms, and coccidia) that could potentially be deadly.
- Minimise exposure to diseases prior to the body developing its own vaccination response and protection.

Benefits of Vaccinating Your Pet

- Vaccinations safeguard your pet's health.
- Diseases that were once widespread and deadly can now be prevented due to the efficacy of vaccinations.
- Vaccines protect you and your family. Some serious diseases like rabies and leptospirosis are transmittable from pets to people, thus vaccinating your pet is crucial for the safety of your family.
- Vaccines help to protect other pets through herd immunity.

Why Does a Pet Need Vaccinations?

- One vaccination will not provide life-long coverage against some of the diseases.
- To prevent diseases from spreading in the canine or feline population.
- Your pet may require vaccinations to travel with you.
- Many kennels and trainers require your pets to be vaccinated if you want to use their services.
- Even if you keep your pets indoors, many contagious diseases are spread by air so they are still at risk of infection.

Vaccinations Benefit Everyone

Vaccinations not only benefit an individual animal, they help to protect the whole community. The fewer pets are vaccinated, the more susceptible they are to illnesses and the more prevalent the disease is.

Protecting your pet helps to protect everyone else's pets and even wild animals, because the more animals are immune to a disease, the more difficult it is for the disease to spread.

Pet Vaccinations



What Vaccinations Does Your Pets Need?

You and your veterinarian will work out a preventative care programme for your pet, including vaccinations. The vet will look at your lifestyle and which diseases are prevalent in your area as this will influence which vaccines need to be administered. For instance, if your puppy will be going to puppy classes, puppy daycare, or kennels, the kennel cough vaccination needs to be added to your pet's vaccine regime.

Illnesses Vaccines Try to Prevent

Rabies

A terrible, deadly disease that affects the nervous system (brain) of animals and people. Once symptoms show, there is no cure. Around 59 000 people die worldwide every year from rabies, with the majority of cases transmitted via dog bites.

Canine parvovirus ('parvo')

A highly contagious and infectious gastrointestinal illness affecting puppies and young dogs which, without treatment, can be deadly.

Canine distemper

A potentially fatal disease that attacks the respiratory, gastrointestinal and nervous systems of dogs.

Adenovirus & canine hepatitis

Viruses that causes upper respiratory tract infections, and could affect the liver and are potentially deadly.

Parainfluenza

A contagious, non-life-threatening, cold-like condition that causes coughing and can lead to diseases like kennel cough.

Leptospirosis

A bacterial illness causing symptoms such as high temperature, severe thirst, increased urination and abdominal pain. It may cause permanent kidney/liver damage.

Kennel cough

A harsh cough that leads to gagging and vomiting. If left untreated, it can develop into severe bronchopneumonia.

Feline rhinotracheitis

An upper respiratory or pulmonary infection in cats that is caused by the herpes virus, affecting vision and respiration.

Feline calicivirus

An infectious virus that is one of the main causes of respiratory infections in cats.

Feline panleukopenia

A viral disease in cats, often called feline distemper, which is highly contagious and can be fatal, especially in kittens.

Feline leukaemia (FeLV)

A virus that can be lethal if not defeated by the animal's immune system.

When Should You Vaccinate Your Pet?

Young puppies/kittens are protected by immunity passed on from their mother. This decreases quickly, hence the need for puppy or kitten vaccinations and, thereafter, annual vaccination boosters, to ensure your pet remains protected.



Pet Vaccinations



TAH's Vaccination Regime

