

FRIENDS OF DOGS/PRIJATELJI PASA FACT SHEET 2



CONTROL OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Make sure you protect your pets and keep them safe by keeping up to date with their vaccinations. If the number of pets protected by vaccines drops our animal companions could be at risk from an outbreak of infectious diseases, some of which can be transmitted to humans.

When to vaccinate?

All dogs need regular vaccinations from an early age. Puppies are typically vaccinated at 8 and 10 weeks, with an initial course of two injections. Your pet should be given a booster annually after their first vaccination. Consult your vet for details. If you feed a local street dog, you should also try to get it vaccinated to prevent the spread of dangerous diseases. If you can afford to feed or keep a dog, you can afford to vaccinate it.

All Dogs should be routinely vaccinated against:

- *Canine parvovirus*
- *Canine distemper virus*
- *Leptospirosis*
- *Infectious canine hepatitis*
- *Rabies*

Canine parvovirus

Caught by contact with faeces from infected dogs. The most common symptoms are severe vomiting and diarrhoea. Affected puppies often become dehydrated. The virus also causes the white blood cell count to drop, leaving the puppy susceptible to other infections. There is no specific treatment; however an infected dog may be put on a drip, given antibiotics, and given medication to try to prevent vomiting. Without any treatment about 80% of dogs with parvovirus will die. With treatment about 85% will survive.

Canine distemper virus

Spread by all bodily secretions (e.g. saliva), usually via direct contact with an infected animal. Symptoms vary from fever and depression, to coughing, vomiting and diarrhoea, or discharge from eyes and mouth. Dogs with very severe symptoms often die. Mildly affected dogs will recover, but some will go on to have neurological problems in later life, causing muscle tics, difficulty walking walking in circles and seizures. There is no specific treatment; however intravenous fluids can be given to prevent dehydration and medication can help to control seizures.

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Leptospirosis (lepto)

A disease caused by a bacterium, usually from infected urine, or by contaminated water, so dogs are at risk if they swim or drink from stagnant water, especially in areas with high numbers of rats. The bacteria can also cause Weil's disease in humans. Symptoms include fever, lethargy, increased thirst, vomiting, bloody diarrhea and jaundice. Treatment involves antibiotics, intravenous fluids and supportive treatment. Less severely affected dogs can recover, but can carry the bacteria for months afterwards, and their urine is an infection risk both to other animals and to humans. Leptospirosis in humans can be fatal.

Infectious canine hepatitis (ICH, also known as **canine adenovirus**)

Spread by contact with the saliva, urine, faeces, blood or nasal discharge of infected dogs. The disease can cause a "kennel cough" type infection, or hepatitis (an infection of the liver). Symptoms include lethargy, coughing, fever, vomiting and diarrhoea, jaundice and abdominal pain. There is no specific treatment; however the symptoms themselves can be treated. Deaths can occur but most dogs will recover.

Rabies

A virus that affects the brain and spinal cord of all mammals and is always fatal if not treated in dogs and humans. It is a **legal requirement to vaccinate your dog against rabies.**

Rabies is usually transmitted via a bite from an infected animal, or through a scratch or a lick on an open, fresh wound. Symptoms include extreme behavioral changes such as restlessness, apprehension, or aggression, strange and unusual behaviour, foaming at the mouth, disorientation, and staggering. Friendly dogs may become irritable, while normally excitable animals may become more docile. Other classic signs of rabies include loss of appetite, weakness, seizures and sudden death. Transmission of the virus can happen before symptoms appear. There is no treatment or cure for rabies once symptoms appear.

Since rabies presents a serious public health threat, dogs who are suspected of having the virus are most often euthanized. **If your dog has been bitten by any wild animal or another street dog, you should take it to the vet immediately.** You should also contact the police or Azil staff if the animal who bit your pet is still at large; or if any animal in your area is showing signs of rabies. **NEVER** attempt to handle or capture a wild animal if it is acting strangely. **If you think you have been bitten by a dog who could have rabies you MUST contact a doctor immediately, as it is a serious, life threatening condition.**

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