

# Is it essential for your pets to have annual vaccinations?



'For the many years the veterinary profession has been staunch advocates of a yearly vaccination protocol for dogs and cats, fundamentally driven by the pharmaceutical companies that produce the vaccines. Studies have shown that many pets had lifelong immunity from their first few yearly vaccines, and in the worst case, most were protected for at least 3-5 years. This information applied to distemper, hepatitis and parvovirus, but did not prove true for the kennel cough vaccines, which struggle to last even 12 months. Combined with evidence that over-vaccination is linked to a number of current diseases (feline vaccine sarcoma, canine hypothyroidism), it has created much debate about the ethical nature of advising yearly vaccines.'

## What about Kennel Cough?

Kennel Cough vaccines must still be given annually, but this mainly applies to dogs that go to kennels on a regular basis. It's important to remember that Kennel Cough is not a deadly disease and most dogs will recover with no treatment at all. There is now also a registered 3 yearly vaccine, which has slightly higher levels of antigen. But the reality is, your regular yearly vaccine is going to be adequate for 3 years also (as titre tests have shown).

## Dr Bruce's recommendations :

- Puppy and kitten vaccines (6 and 12 weeks) and the first annual vaccination, then every 3 yrs
- Kennel cough vaccines only for dogs that are going to be kennelled within 6 months
- Antibody testing for those clients that just want to know if their pets really do need a top up vaccination
- Older pets (over 10-12 yrs old) do not require any more vaccinations if they have a good history of vaccination
- Seek an annual health check for your pets, as an early detection of abnormalities is key to an improved outcome.