



## **What exactly are we vaccinating for?**

**Distemper combination** – this vaccine contains a combination of 4 separate, highly contagious viruses (Distemper, Hepatitis, Parainfluenza and Parvovirus). Distemper and parvovirus are potentially fatal diseases that affect mostly young puppies but have been known to affect adults as well. Hepatitis is a virus that can cause the liver to shut down and parainfluenza is a flu-like virus affecting the respiratory tract (not transmittable to humans). The viruses are transmitted through feces, urine or body secretions (nasal, eye, saliva) so infection occurs when the dog has come into contact with any of these.

**Leptospirosis** – this vaccine helps to reduce the likelihood that a dog will be infected with Leptospirosis, a bacterial infection which can cause the liver and kidneys to fail. Wildlife (raccoons, skunks, rats, etc) are common carriers of the bacteria so dogs that go on walks in trails/woods, swim in water or go to the cottage are at higher risk. This vaccine is based on lifestyle risk so not all dogs will receive this vaccine. Leptospirosis is also a zoonotic disease meaning it can be passed to humans.

**Bordetella** – this bacteria is a highly contagious disease that is transmitted through the air. Any situation where your dog will come into contact with other dogs (grooming, doggy day care, kennels, humane society, dog parks etc) is a risk for infection. It can cause a very harsh cough potentially leading to pneumonia.

**Rabies** – this virus is one of the most feared diseases by veterinarians and humans alike as it is almost always fatal. Rabies attacks the brain and nervous system eventually leading to death. This disease is also zoonotic and wildlife are often the cause of domestic animals becoming infected. Federal regulations require all domestic animals to be vaccinated against rabies.

*Cornell Animal Hospital has set up a vaccination protocol whereby your dog will only be vaccinated when it is necessary. For instance, after the puppies first year of life, our distemper combination and rabies vaccines are only given once every 3 years (rabies and distemper must be boosted 1 year after the initial set to be protective). Leptospirosis and bordetella need to be done annually in order to be effective.*

