

Preventative measures in dogs.

Vaccination.

Vaccinating dogs is critical in controlling the spread of some common infectious diseases. We recommend all dogs at least be vaccinated for parvovirus, distemper and hepatitis. Our core vaccine program also offers some protections from certain common leptospirosis infections and coronavirus (a diarrhoea virus). Parvovirus is common in this region and we regularly treat animals for this life threatening yet preventable disease.

Another common group of highly infectious diseases fall under the banner ' Kennel cough'. Kennel cough is characterised by a very uncomfortable dry, hacking cough, malaise, inappetence and depression and tends to last 2-3 weeks. We have a very effective vaccine for this disease and recommend its use in any dog exposed to other dogs on walks, at kennels, shows, dog parks etc.

Dogs should begin a vaccination course no later than 8 weeks of age and require a second vaccination, usually 1 month later. Annual boosters are given after the initial vaccination program.

Worming

Intestinal worms of dogs are important in canine health but may also pose **health risks to humans**. Virtually all dogs are exposed to intestinal worms as pups. As a minimum, we recommend all dogs receive a regime of prophylactic worming every 3 months. Some dogs are at increased risk of encountering immature hydatid worms and these dogs should be treated monthly. Contact our staff for information on hydatid worm risks and control. **Dogs in contact with children should be wormed monthly**. Breeding bitches should be wormed before breeding, 10 days before their due date and 4 weeks after whelping. Pups need worming at 2, 4 , 8 and 12 weeks of age. It is important to **weigh animals** prior to worming, use the correct dose for weight and **never underdose** worming medications.

Heartworm is spread from infected dogs via mosquitos. Dogs in this region are at a very low risk of contracting this disease. However dogs that travel should be protected with a preventative program. Long lasting 12 monthly injections are available. Some intestinal worming and comprehensive parasite control medications can also be used as part of a heartworm program. Contact Glen Innes Veterinary Hospital for advice.

Diet

A very large percentage of conditions that we treat are influenced by canine nutrition and weight management. Appropriate body condition is central to preventative health in dogs. Weight management has been shown to have a marked effect on longevity and quality of life in dogs. Our clinic scales are always available at no charge to help manage pet nutrition issues. Also our staff can go through body condition assesment and offer dietary advice.

Desexing

Speying bitches and castrating dogs has obvious population control benefits. Also some behavioural issues such as aggresion, straying etc, can be curtailed by desexing. There are also some long term health benefits. Females are much less prone to mammary tumour development if speying is performed early in life. Males are at

much reduced risk of developing prostatic (and obviously testicular) enlargement and tumours after castration.