When it comes to vaccinations, a lot has changed in the past 30 years. Except in certain circumstances, annual vaccinations are a thing of the past. Vaccinations are still an important part of your pet’s preventive health care plan, but veterinarians now tailor them to the needs of individual animals, based on their lifestyle, potential risks, and overall health. The following recommendations from the American Animal Hospital Association and the American Association of Feline Practitioners will help you understand your pet’s vaccination needs so you can work with your veterinarian to prevent disease and maintain good health.

### Core Vaccinations for Dogs

These are vaccinations every dog should have. They are given at specific intervals during puppyhood.

**6 weeks or older:**
- Canine distemper, parvovirus, adenovirus-2, repeated every 2 to 4 weeks until puppies are at least 16 weeks (4 months) old.
- Rabies (the only vaccination required by law throughout a dog’s life).

**12 to 16 weeks:**
- Initial dose is given 4 weeks prior to exposure, followed by a second dose 2 to 4 weeks later. This allows for two weeks between the vaccines, plus two weeks to allow time for the immune response to develop.

**16 months:**
- Booster vaccinations for distemper, parvovirus, adenovirus-2, and rabies.

**18 to 20 weeks:**
- Additional dose for puppies who received initial distemper, parvovirus, and adenovirus-2 vaccinations at 16 weeks of age.

### Non-Core Vaccinations for Dogs

These vaccinations are not appropriate for every dog and are not typically given to puppies unless they are at risk. They are given to dogs at risk due to lifestyle, environment, or geographic considerations, such as being boarded, going among large numbers of dogs at shows or other events, hunting or hiking in tick-infested areas, or risk of exposure due to community outbreak.

**Canine influenza virus-H3N2:**
- Initial dose is given 4 weeks prior to possible exposure, followed by a second dose 2 to 4 weeks later. This allows for two weeks between the vaccines, plus two weeks to allow time for the immune response to develop.
- Booster one year after completion of initial two-dose series and then annually for at-risk dogs. Can be given to puppies as young as 6 to 8 weeks old. Dogs at risk for exposure to influenza virus should be vaccinated against both H3N2 and H3N8 strains. Vaccinated dogs may still become infected following exposure, develop mild clinical signs, and shed virulent virus for a time.

**Bordetella bronchiseptica combined with canine parainfluenza:**
- When vaccination is recommended for dogs being boarded or attending daycare, a single intranasal dose can be given as early as 8 to 16 weeks of age. Booster at-risk dogs annually.

**Leptospira:**
- Initial dose given as early as 8 to 9 weeks if puppy or dog is at risk of exposure through entering or drinking from rivers, lakes, or streams; roaming on rural property; exposure to wild animals or farm animal species anywhere outdoors; and contact with infected rodents or dogs or dogs who have experienced the risk factors previously mentioned. Second dose is given 2 to 4 weeks later. Booster at-risk dogs annually.

**Borrelia burgdorferi (canine Lyme disease):**
- Initial dose can be given to at-risk dogs as early as 8 to 9 weeks of age, followed by a second dose 2 to 4 weeks later. Ask your veterinarian about the risk of canine Lyme disease in your area as well as about tick prevention.