



Feb. 21, 2006

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HDHHS recommends vaccinating dogs against distemper

The Houston Department of Health and Human Services reminds the public that it is canine distemper season and dogs should receive annual vaccinations to ensure protection from the disease.

Distemper is a contagious, often fatal, viral disease that affects a dog's respiratory, gastrointestinal and central nervous system. Dogs that survive the disease usually have lifelong health problems.

Early symptoms of distemper include fever, runny nose, eye discharge, lack of appetite, diarrhea and vomiting.

HDHHS recommends that people take their dogs to a veterinarian if they notice any of the symptoms. Vaccination works well even in animals that have already been exposed to the virus, if it is administered within four days of exposure.

Infected dogs shed the virus through bodily secretions and excretions, especially respiratory secretions. The primary mode of transmission is airborne viral particles breathed in by dogs.

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