



MEDIA RELEASE

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Important to get vaccination message right

While it's good to see the current debate about three yearly vaccination for pets and the growing awareness of pet owners, the Australian Veterinary Association (AVA) wants the correct message to go out to protect the health and wellbeing of our pets.

The AVA has recently revised its policy to recommend less frequent vaccinations for adult dogs and cats and wants to stress the need for greater numbers of puppies and kittens to be vaccinated.

"Vaccination of dogs and cats saves hundreds of thousands of our pet's lives every year in Australia," Dr Mark Lawrie, AVA President said.

"It makes the number of cases of previously common and deadly diseases like distemper in dogs and panleucopaenia in cats very low.

"Vaccination for some of the diseases like these (core vaccinations) may not be needed on an annual basis. Others such as canine cough (or kennel cough) should still be boosted at least every year.

"This is a complex issue which really calls for pet owners to discuss their pet's needs with their vet. However, some recent messages which have gone out to the public haven't given clear information on what pet owners should be doing.

"Puppies and kittens absolutely need to be vaccinated and to have their booster shots. You need to then talk about their ongoing vaccination schedule with your vet.

"This way you can discuss the risk for your animal which can depend on many things such as the age of your pet, their vaccination history or if you live in a disease prone area.

"We also encourage yearly health checks for older dogs and cats with or without vaccination. This is important to pick up on any disease that might be developing, before it is too late.

"These appointments also offer the chance to check if your pet's immunity is at the right level."

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The Australian Veterinary Association (AVA) is the national professional association of veterinary surgeons in Australia. Founded in 1921, the AVA today represents 5000 members working in all areas of animal science, health and welfare.