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## **Lyme Disease Prevention Starts Now!**

At the Zimmerman Veterinary Clinic, we treat dogs for Lyme Disease, almost on a daily basis. Prevention, through vaccination and tick control, is the only way to truly protect your dog. Now is the time to start your dog's lyme vaccination or booster the vaccine if it is overdue. Pets receiving the vaccine for the first time will need two vaccines 3 weeks apart. Having the vaccine updated in February will ensure your dog is protected when the ticks start emerging in March and April. If your pet is current on their lyme vaccination, continue to have it boosted yearly when due.

### **I only see a couple ticks a year on my pet, why do I need to vaccinate against Lyme disease?**

All it takes is one tick bite to contract Lyme disease. Any pet that goes in taller grass, brush or wooded areas should be vaccinated for lyme disease. Once lyme disease is contracted, it can cause swollen-painful joints, vomiting, diarrhea, lethargy and kidney failure.

### **My pet has been positive for Lyme in the past so I don't vaccinate anymore.**

Pets may still show up positive on an in-clinic test, called a 4dx test, even after Lyme disease has been successfully treated. This is because the pet has antibodies or proteins that are in their system from the past infection. Additional bloodwork called a titer can tell us if a positive test means a new infection. Anytime a pet is bitten by a tick, it can be reinfected with lyme disease. Pets that are positive for lyme disease are living in areas where they can get reinfected, these pets need extra protection and vaccination is especially important.

### **I have vaccinated my pet and they still contracted Lyme Disease.**

Lyme bacteria is a tricky disease and does many things to fool a pet's body. No vaccination provides 100% protection, however, vaccination is a much better option than no vaccination. At The Zimmerman Veterinary Clinic we administer the Nobivac Lyme vaccination. The vaccination provides over 90% efficacy against prevention of Lyme Disease. If a vaccinated pet does test positive for Lyme Disease we see that the pet does not get sick or as sick as unvaccinated dogs. The more protection you provide your pet the less chance of them getting Lyme Disease. Pets should have monthly Frontline Plus applied to kill ticks. Any tick should be removed by tweezers if found on the pet. If a pet is in an area where ticks are severe in addition to Frontline Plus a tick collar called Scalibor (available through veterinarians) has been designed to use along with Frontline for even more protection.

Minnesota and the Zimmerman area have a high prevalence of Lyme disease. By vaccinating against Lyme Disease, using a proven flea and tick treatment monthly such as Frontline Plus or Scalibor Collar, and removing ticks when found, you will give your pet the best chance of staying healthy.

Disclaimer: This written content is meant to be educational and is not medical advice. Always consult a veterinarian about medical advice for your pet.