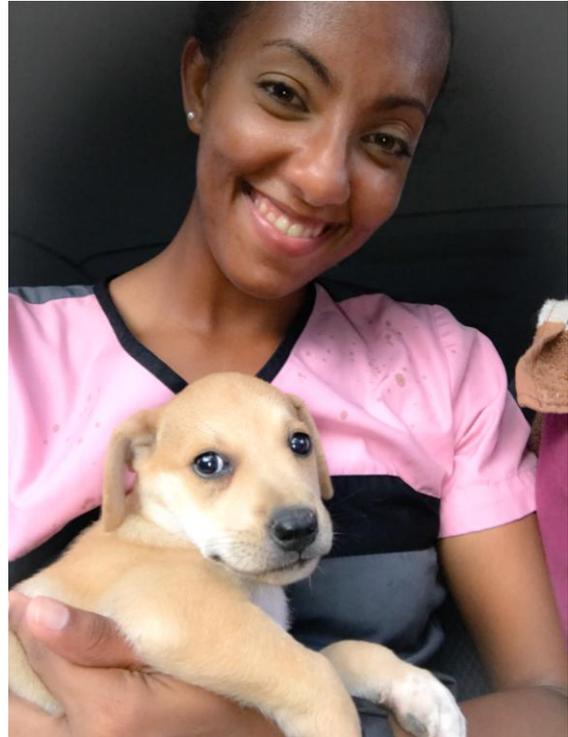


## Vaccinations and your pet

**Dr. Simone Johnally**

One can say that few things in life compare to the joy of having a pet. They become a member of the family, one to share our happiest and saddest moments with. I myself have experienced the comfort of my dog licking my hands and resting his head in my lap after a bad day at work. His sheer excitement at the sight of my car at the front gate after weeks of being away from home, compelled him to whine until it was open so he could rush out and jump up on my legs to greet me.



It's a wonderful feeling to feel loved and needed by another and for some, this companionship is the most important relationship they have.

In order to maintain that connection, you must understand then the importance of prolonging the life of your pet. One of the most crucial ways to do this is through vaccination. For owners of young puppies, this is a highly vulnerable period for your precious friends, at which time their immunity is low and easily compromised. Vaccines are designed with the genetic material of weakened viral antigens in small doses, which when administered aid the body in generating an immune response. This produces antibodies that fight off the virus. Specialised lymphocytes called memory cells retain this

knowledge of the encounter and can quickly reproduce the antibodies when necessary to fight off the real virus when threatened with it.

This is an important component of preventative health care, just as you would care for a newborn human being. Routine vaccination schedules begin at about 6-8 weeks of life and continue every 3-4 weeks for 3 to 4 doses. These help in protecting against diseases such as Parvovirus, Canine Distemper, Hepatitis, Leptospirosis, Rabies, Coronavirus and others depending on your geographic location and risk of exposure. So if you want to keep your precious friends healthy and close by your side, remember to ask your local veterinarian about vaccinations.