

VACCINATION NEWSFLASH!

All 27 veterinary schools in North America are in the process of changing their protocols for vaccinating dogs and cats. Some of this information will present an ethical & economic challenge to vets, and there will be skeptics. Some organizations have come up with a political compromise suggesting vaccinations every 3 years to appease those who fear loss of income vs. those concerned about potential side effects. Politics, traditions, or the doctor's economic well being should not be a factor in medical decision.

NEW PRINCIPLES OF IMMUNOLOGY

"Dogs and cats immune systems mature fully at 6 months. If a modified live virus vaccine is given after 6 months of age, it produces an immunity which is good for the life of the pet (ie: canine distemper, parvo, feline distemper). If another MLV vaccine is given a year later, the antibodies from the first vaccine neutralize the antigens of the second vaccine and there is little or no effect. The titer is not "boosted" nor are more memory cells induced." Not only are annual boosters for parvo and distemper unnecessary, they subject the pet to potential risks of allergic reactions and immune-mediated hemolytic anemia. "There is no scientific documentation to back up label claims for annual administration of MLV vaccines." Puppies receive antibodies through their mothers milk. This natural protection can last 8-14 weeks. Puppies & kittens should NOT be vaccinated at LESS than 8 weeks. Maternal immunity will neutralize the vaccine and little protection (0-38%) will be produced. Vaccination at 6 weeks will, however, delay the timing of the first highly effective vaccine. Vaccinations given 2 weeks apart suppress rather than stimulate the immune system. A series of vaccinations is given starting at 8 weeks and given 3-4 weeks apart up to 16 weeks of age. Another vaccination given sometime after 6 months of age (usually at 1 year 4 mo) will provide lifetime immunity.

CURRENT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DOGS

Distemper & Parvo-

"According to Dr. Schultz, AVMA, 8-15-95, when a vaccinations series given at 2, 3 & 4 months and again at 1 year with a MLV, puppies and kitten program memory cells that survive for life, providing lifelong immunity." Dr. Carmichael at Cornell and Dr. Schultz have studies showing immunity against challenge at 2-10 years for canine distemper & 4 years for parvovirus. Studies for longer duration are pending. "There are no new strains of parvovirus as one mfg. would like to suggest. Parvovirus vaccination provides cross immunity for all types." Hepatitis (Adenovirus) is one of the agents known to be a cause of kennel cough. Only vaccines with CAV-2 should be used as CAV-1 vaccines carry the risk of "hepatitis blue-eye" reactions & kidney damage.

Bordetella Parainfluenza: Commonly called "Kennel cough". Recommended only for those dogs boarded, groomed, taken to dog shows, or for any reason housed where exposed to a lot of dogs. The intranasal vaccine provides more complete and more rapid onset of immunity with less chance of reaction. Immunity requires 72 hours and does not protect from every cause of kennel cough. Immunity is of short duration (4 to 6 months).

RABIES

There have been no reported cases of rabid dogs or cats in Harris, Montgomery or Ft. Bend Counties [Texas], there have been rabid skunks and bats so the potential exists. It is a killed vaccine and must be given every year. Lyme disease is a tick born disease which can cause lameness, kidney failure and heart disease in dogs. Ticks can also transmit the disease to humans. The original Ft. Dodge killed bacteria has proven to be the most effective vaccine. Lyme disease prevention should emphasize early removal of ticks. Amitraz collars are more effective than Top Spot, as amitraz paralyzes the tick's mouth parts preventing transmission of disease.

VACCINATIONS NOT RECOMMENDED

Multiple components in vaccines compete with each other for the immune system and result in lesser immunity for each individual disease as well as increasing the risk of a reaction.

Canine Corona Virus is only a disease of puppies. It is rare, self limiting (dogs get well in 3 days without treatment). Cornell & Texas A&M have only diagnosed one case each in the last 7 years. Corona virus does not cause disease in adult dogs.

Leptospirosis vaccine is a common cause of adverse reactions in dogs. Most of the clinical cases of lepto reported in dogs in the US are caused by serovaars (or types) grippotyphosa and bratsilvia. The vaccines contain different serovaars eanicola and icthohemorrhagica. Cross protection is not provided and protection is short lived. Lepto vaccine is immuno-suppressive to puppies less than 16 weeks