

# How to Protect Your Dog

From  
a Vaccine  
Junkie

**Save Your  
Dog from  
Unnecessary  
Vaccines!**



Paula Terifaj, DVM



## **How to Protect Your Dog From a Vaccine Junkie Save Your Dog from Unnecessary Vaccines!**

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## About the Author

**D**r. Paula Terifaj graduated from the School of Veterinary Medicine at UC Davis, California in 1986. She has spent more than 20 years developing her special focus on preventative medicine. Throughout her veterinary career, she has educated her clients on how to prevent and treat disease using proper nutritional supplements and adopting better diets. Her approach offers pet owners safe alternatives to traditional (and sometimes outdated) medical protocols. Practicing an integrative approach to health care allows her patients to benefit from both the advances made by modern science and the wisdom found in more non-traditional therapies.

After many years of successfully teaching dog owners how to play an active role in their dog's health care, she now shares this vital information with other dog owners in a concisely written format called *30 Minute Vet Consult*. Her emphasis on health education and prevention has earned her a loyal following of dog lovers.

Dr. Terifaj is the owner of Founders Veterinary Clinic in Brea, CA, where she continues to practice her integrative holistic approach treating both dogs and cats. She is the veterinary consultant for The DOGie Bag, a company that manufactures naturally made food for dogs using only ingredients that can be safely consumed by humans.

Dr. Terifaj is also known for her political stand against Breed Specific Legislation and leads a grassroots movement against restrictive breed polices by city government and insurance companies called ROVERlution. In her spare time, she enjoys the companionship of her beloved dogs, Rosie, Woody, and Rover.



# Introduction

**I**n today's fast paced world, there simply isn't enough time for anyone to successfully research all the important topics that impact our lives. We especially need the advice of experts to help us wade through a maze of mounting medical information and make sound medical decisions.

My mission is to be your medical guide and help you to make the best decisions for your dog's health care. Therefore, I will encourage you to be an advocate for your dog during veterinary visits by empowering you with accurate and up to date information. So, take me along with you when you are discussing your dog's medical treatment with your veterinarian. You have an ally.

In these consults, you will gain powerful knowledge and thereby eliminate guesswork or doctors' agendas that may not be right for your dog. Along with factual information, you will no doubt get my own doctor's opinion. So, you may use me as your second or third opinion. It is my greatest hope that our consults together will prove to make a healthy difference in the life of your beloved dog friend.

## Chapter 1

# Sounding the Vaccine Alarm Bell

### *Please Don't Shoot Your Dog!*

The next time you find that flashy postcard from your vet in your mailbox reminding you of all the shots your dog is due for...STOP. Do not pick up the phone to make *that* appointment. Instead, call to make an appointment for a thorough yearly physical examination. And be ready to have a serious chat with your vet about vaccines. Don't worry about the challenge that awaits you. You will be ready to put the brakes on any vet sporting the virtues of annual vaccinations. Armed with updated vaccine guidelines provided in this consult, you will have the power of truth on your side, not opinion. I have outlined everything you, a devoted dog lover, needs to know *before* your dog bounces out of your car door and into the parking lot of your vet's office.

Now, you finally have the knowledge to confidently choose the vaccinations your dog needs and discard those deemed unnecessary. Fear tactics won't work any more. You are empowered to be your dog's best defense against unwarranted vaccines and outdated protocols. Let us begin!



## ***When the Bells Went Off...***

My vaccine alarm went off in 1991 when an article appeared in the prestigious *Journal of the American Veterinary Association*, (JAVMA), sending this warning to veterinarians:

- Vaccination is a potent medical procedure with both benefits and risks.
- There is no proof that many of the yearly vaccinations are necessary.
- Immunity from vaccines in many instances can be lifelong.

## ***More Proof...***

In 2001, Dr. Ronald Schultz, a veterinary immunologist and professor at the University of Wisconsin–Madison School of Veterinary Medicine, reported that dogs were indeed being vaccinated too often. Based on more than twenty-five years of vaccine research, Schultz provided the needed science to show that many vaccines provide lifelong immunity. From his research, he reported that additional vaccines given after a dog's one-year birthday have doubtful value. And Schultz confirmed the earlier warning from 1991 that indiscriminate use of vaccines can and do trigger adverse reactions.

It is time to break out of the vaccine Stone Ages and spread the news: After your dog receives his “puppy shots,” additional vaccines given after his first celebrated one-year birthday have doubtful value. If you are like most dog owners, you too have been duped by the vaccine lure of needing to maintain annual updated protection.

Keep reading to find out why repeated annual vaccinations will not provide your dog with ongoing protection and, worse, why this practice is now considered to be the perfect game of Russian roulette.

## ***Twelve Years later...The Canine Veterinary Task Force to the Rescue!***

Experts like Dr Schultz along with another trailblazer Dr. Jean Dodds, a renowned hematologist and the founder of Hemopet, were two of the earliest vaccine whistle-blowers starting the heated vaccine debate in the veterinary community back in the mid-1980's. From their early findings, growing bodies of scientific research have continued to point out the need for adopting new vaccine guidelines. But the dismal failure of these new medical findings to be embraced by the veterinary community motivated the American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA) to finally take action. To mitigate the growing concerns about reported vaccine reactions and related vaccine illnesses, the AAHA assembled the Canine Veterinary Task Force in 2003. Its findings follow next...

### ***A Very Loud Twenty-Year-Old Echo...***

It is astonishing to note that more than 20 years after vaccines were first reported to pose significant risks, a landside report by the American Animal Hospital Association Canine Vaccine Task Force was published in the *Journal of the American Animal Hospital Association*, JAAHA (vol. 39 March/April 2003) that warned:

- Current knowledge supports a statement that no vaccine is always safe, no vaccine is always protective, and no vaccine is always indicated.
- Misunderstanding, misinformation, and the conservative nature of our profession have largely slowed the adoption of protocols calling for a decreased frequency of vaccination.

- Our findings are supported by a growing body of veterinary information, as well as developed epidemiological vigilance in human medicine, that indicates immunity induced by vaccination is extremely long-lasting and in most cases lifelong.

## ***Braving the New World***

Let me introduce Dr. Bob Rogers, an outspoken Texas veterinarian who has this to say (excerpt taken from his website):

*“Here are the facts as I see them. I have done what I believe a Doctor of Medicine should do. I obtain over 100 hours of continuing education every year, including about four hours each year on vaccinations. I read peer reviewed journals, with what I believe is a healthy skepticism. I do not get my continuing education from drug companies or their ads. I adopt what I have learned into my practice, and try to keep my recommendations to my clients based on current evidence-based information.”*

To back up his commitment and ethics, Dr. Rogers has taken on the vaccine controversy as his personal mission. He even filed a lawsuit against his state of Texas forcing the adoption of a three-year rabies vaccine to stop veterinarians from giving rabies shots annually. His mission is to be an advocate for the critters, “for in this world they have no voice, they have no choice.” He also firmly warns his colleagues not to misuse vaccines in light of new information. Meet this courageous, outspoken doc when you visit his website:

<http://www.critteradvocacy.org/>

Who else is speaking up to solve the mysteries of health care issues facing today's modern dog? Listen to a courageously witty Maltese called Chiclet. Enlisting the writing skills of Jan Rasmussen, Chiclet and Rasmussen wrote an award-winning book called *Scared Poopless: The Straight Scoop on Dog Care*.

This is a delightful read packed with loads of important information and tips on better dog care. It's available at <http://www.dog4dogs.com>

***Kudos to these veterinary mavericks!***



## Chapter 2

# Opinions Do Not Outrank Facts!

It is a well-established fact that vaccines have halted the spread of several deadly diseases. And of course we all should be grateful. But we must temper our applause by accepting their potential to also cause adverse effects, and, in some cases, even death. Doctors must be willing to apply rational thinking and let go of their false assumptions if vaccines are to truly benefit their patients. They must, in fact, honor the wisdom of the sacred doctor's oath: *"First, do no harm."*

And responsible dog owners must understand this: The economic health of drug companies and the doctors they seduce have no place in your dog's life.

Does your dog need to be vaccinated? *YES!*

Which vaccines should be given? *The actual need varies considerably from previous set standards!*

How often should you vaccinate? *With the exception of mandated rabies vaccination, perhaps never again!*



## ***Do Your Homework***

Which vaccines and how often to vaccinate your dog are crucial questions requiring the acceptance of new medical findings, careful thought, and a departure from medical traditions. And don't think that your veterinarian should be trusted to make all your dog's healthcare decisions while you simply nod along. Your nodding is not the action of taking responsibility for your dog's health, it is lazy delegation. You need to be prepared to challenge old-school thinking and those doctors who remain locked into their old habits. Not only can you ill afford the expense of following medical advice from stubborn doctors who dangerously resist change, your dog can ill afford the medical consequences!

Dr. Ronald Schultz, an expert on how the immune system works, reports:

*“Dogs vaccinated with a modified live core vaccine just once again after their 12 week birthday are likely to be immune to these diseases for the rest of their life.”*

**Dr. Schultz has gone on record telling dog owners that if their dog receives a DHP (Distemper, Hepatitis and Parvo) shot at 12 weeks and then again once more, he may not need another vaccine for the rest of his life!**



## Chapter 3

# New Vaccine Protocol in 2006 Finds Many Vaccines Not Necessary

In 2006, new guidelines were put in place and veterinarians have been strongly advised to follow them. After careful research and study, this task force separated vaccines into three different categories: the core vaccines; the non-core vaccines; and the not recommended vaccines.

**Core = Recommended**

**Non-core = Unnecessary**

**Not recommended = Do Not Use**



# AAHA 2006 Vaccination Protocol

## Core Vaccines

Vaccines that should be given to every dog:

- Distemper\*
- Hepatitis (adenovirus-2)\*
- Parvovirus\*
- Rabies

\***DHP** (common abbreviation for the 3-in-1 vaccine.)

## Non-core Vaccines

Optional vaccines that should be considered only if an individual dog's lifestyle or risk factors strongly warrant it:

- Leptospirosis\*
- Lyme\*
- Bordetella (kennel cough)
- Parainfluenza

\*May be considered on a regional basis in areas where these diseases are known to be a true risk.

## Not Recommended

Vaccines not recommended under any circumstances:

- Adenovirus-1
- Coronavirus
- Giardia
- Crotalus atrox Toxoid (rattlesnake)
- Porphyromonas (periodontal disease)



**It is important for you to discover that the majority of vaccines on the market today have been deemed unnecessary or not recommended at all!**

*Adapted from the American Animal Hospital Association's 2006 Canine Vaccine Guidelines.*

This twenty-eight-page report can be viewed on the AAHA website:

[http://aahanet.org/About\\_aaha/vaccine\\_guidelines06.pdf](http://aahanet.org/About_aaha/vaccine_guidelines06.pdf)

## **-- Simple Summary of AAHA Guidelines --**

- There is no scientific evidence to support the recommendation made by drug companies that label their vaccines to be given annually.
- There is overwhelming evidence that vaccinations given after the age of six months can provide adequate protection for up to seven years and possibly for life.
- A strong recommendation was made to vaccinate no more often than every three years.

**Dr Schultz has boldly pointed out that; “no more often than” could also be interpreted to mean “never again.” He reminds us that multiple studies have shown that dogs properly immunized in puppyhood maintain lifetime immunity to hepatitis, distemper and parvovirus.**



The recommendation made by the Canine Veterinary Task Force to repeat core vaccines every three years has been deemed too conservative by many notable vaccine critics. In fact, a three-year interval is considered by some critics to be an arbitrary number, perhaps chosen to appease the fear of lost vaccine revenues by worried veterinarians.

Realizing the struggle ahead to change habitual traditions, which also carry financial rewards, undoubtedly left dog owners with a watered-down three-year vaccine recommendation to revaccinate.

## Chapter 4

# Vaccine Task Force Exposes Greed & Deception

When facts are simply ignored, the motivation is often greed. Don't worry if you can't interpret some of this doc talk—in the simplest of terms, your dog may be getting too many unnecessary vaccines. Dogs are suffering the ill effects of being over vaccinated, and these unnecessary vaccines are gouging the pocketbooks of mislead consumers. One of the biggest moneymaking myths in the veterinary marketplace is the exaggerated need for annual *core* vaccinations. Talk of adding the *non-core* vaccines should put you on alert...and the recommendation to add any of the *not recommended* vaccines should cause you to seriously reconsider choosing another doctor for your dog's health care.

Remember the new vaccine guidelines have successfully challenged outdated thinking. Of major importance is the identification of which vaccines are useful and which vaccines are questionable. Veterinarians are being strongly cautioned not to endorse those vaccines that have been deemed *not recommended*. These vaccine darlings have been birthed by creative drug companies and promoted by slick marketing experts. Save your money and don't jeopardize your dog's health!



## ***Vaccine Task Force: Challenges Weapons of Mass Deception***

Keep in mind that the Canine Veterinary Task Force consists of a team of experts from the fields of immunology, infectious diseases, and internal medicine. These chosen experts have no commercial ties to the overzealous pharmaceutical industry. It is a known fact that clever drug companies employ weapons of mass deception by hyping benefits while hiding negative side effects. Worse yet, these masters of manipulation can create a market where a true need often does not exist.

Proof of creative vaccine marketing is exposed when vaccines have been deemed either *unnecessary* or *not recommended* by a task force of independent researchers:

### **Vaccines that have been deemed *unnecessary*:**

- Leptospirosis\*
- Lyme\*
- Bordetella (kennel cough)
- Parainfluenza

### **Vaccines that are *not recommended*:**



- Adenovirus-1
- Coronavirus
- Giardia
- Crotalus atrox Toxoid
- Porphyromonas

*\*May be considered on a regional basis in areas where these diseases are known to be a true risk.*

## **The above vaccines carry one or more of the following warnings:**

- 1) Unreasonable adverse side effects
- 2) Questionable need, not a serious health threat
- 3) Not proven to provide adequate protection

### **This bears repeating:**

It is important for you to discover that the majority of vaccines on the market today have been deemed *unnecessary* or *not recommended* at all!

## ***Vaccine Task Force: Extends Duration of Immunity***

Extending the duration of immunity (DOI) to three years *or longer* was another major breakthrough. More proof that there is no solid reason to vaccinate dogs on an annual basis.

## ***Vaccine Task Force: Warnings are Given***

Another important finding was the substantiation that vaccines carry the risk of unwanted side effects that can cause fatal reactions or lead to the development of autoimmune diseases. The Leptospirosis vaccine (one of the non-core vaccines) has been reported to cause the most adverse reactions! More proof that you need to exercise caution and judgment when deciding how to best vaccinate your dog.

## Chapter 5

# Warning: Vaccines are NOT Harmless

Immune stimulation caused by giving your dog a vaccine can sometimes go haywire. Going haywire is when the immune system kicks into overdrive and starts making antibodies against its own body tissues. When a trigger-happy immune system begins to attack its own vital organs, it can lead to deadly **autoimmune diseases** commonly attacking the

- Thyroid gland
- Joints
- Liver
- Kidneys
- Brain and nervous systems
- Red blood cells and platelets

Abnormal immune responses can also lead to these **chronic diseases**:

- Skin allergies
- Seizures or epilepsy
- Cancerous tumors at the site of the injection
- Inflammatory bowel disease



Less notable reactions such as fever, loss of appetite, and sluggishness are usually not attributed to a recent vaccination; but in fact the vaccine villain has struck again and goes undetected.

While it is important to understand that vaccinations have halted the spread of several deadly viral diseases such as rabies, distemper, and parvo, they can also damage the immune system and cause other illnesses. Therefore, it is prudent to select to vaccinate *against only* those infectious diseases that your dog is most at risk for contacting. You must always consider your dog's risk factors (age, lifestyle, and health status) before vaccinating.

**Not only are annual vaccinations an unnecessary expense, they are bullets to the immune system. They can expose your dog to harmful allergic reactions and immune-mediated diseases.**

- **Realize that YOU are in control, not your vet.**
- **Make informed decisions.**
- **Your dog is depending on YOU!**



## Chapter 6

# The Need for Rational Vaccine Protocols

Before deciding on the safest vaccine protocol for your dog, you must evaluate these three main factors: lifestyle, age, and health status. Let's look at lifestyle first.

## Lifestyles

### Low risk...

The happy stay-at-home house dog who has been successfully vaccinated is living a low-risk lifestyle. This dog can be easily spotted trotting around the local neighborhood. He also may enjoy visits to local dog parks, and he never turns down a party invite from a dog neighbor.

### Moderate risk...

Sporting dogs under stress that are often exposed to wider ranges of environments and travel conditions are living a moderate risk lifestyle. Therefore, they need to be evaluated on a more regional basis.

### High risk...

The unfortunate dog that becomes the prisoner of an animal shelter will no doubt be challenged by stressful conditions, poor diet, and lots of infectious bugs. This also rings true for unhealthy environments created by puppy mill operators. These poor dogs are at high risk and are often sick when purchased from animal shelters or pet stores.



**WAKE UP!** Pet stores are a fool's paradise. Don't pay big bucks for big problems. These designer dogs are bred for profits—not for bloodlines.

## **DON'T SHOP when you can ADOPT!**

Help put an end to the tragic problem of pet overpopulation.

Over 5 million dogs and cats are killed every year  
in animal shelters! Find a great pet to adopt at

<http://www.Petfinders.com>



### ***Age Concerns***

Puppies under the age of six months bear the greatest risk of contracting contagious diseases. Just as their bodies are quickly developing in size, so are their immune systems gearing up to wage war against potential invaders. As discussed earlier, this is the most important time to begin a rational vaccine protocol. Conversely, as your dog ages and his immune system reaches its full potential, his risk of succumbing to infectious disease goes down—thus the need for fewer, if any, vaccines.

### ***Health Status***

Dogs with preexisting medical problems are at higher risk of suffering an adverse vaccine reaction. This may be especially true for those dogs suffering from various allergies. The most common allergies we treat are the result of an overly stimulated immune system waging war against flea bites, plant materials (grasses, trees, pollens, and molds), and even food. Those dogs who suffer from flea bites (flea allergic dermatitis), hay fever

symptoms (medically known as atopy), and food sensitivities (intolerance to certain proteins, grains, or additives) are more inclined to overreact to a vaccine. Vaccinating these dogs may be adding fuel to a slow burning fire.

Dogs suffering from seizure disorders and terminal illnesses like cancer are also at higher risk for adverse reactions. See letter of exemption for the rabies vaccine on page 35.

**Caution:** Dogs previously reported to have adverse vaccine reactions (facial swelling, hives, skin rashes) may have a fatal anaphylactic reaction to future vaccines.

### ***In All Cases, Risk vs Benefit Must Be Weighed***

With this powerful information now at your fingertips, you are empowered to make informed decisions and to review these findings with your veterinarian.

From pet health advocate and author of *Shock to the System*, Catherine O' Driscoll makes this sobering statement:

*“Politics, tradition, or the economic well-being of veterinarians and pharmaceutical companies should not be a factor in making medical decisions.”*

Amen!

## Chapter 7

# Avoid the Vaccine Trap: Boarding Kennels and Day Care

Now that you have conquered the vaccine issue faced at your vet's office, you need to prepare for another hurdle should you decide to surrender your dog to a boarding kennel. You are likely to enter another vaccine battleground when you are asked for proof of required annual vaccines. Although veterinarians should be held accountable for knowing about the new vaccine guidelines put forth in 2006, folks who operate boarding facilities and day care businesses may not have updated their policies.

Be prepared to review the 2006 updated vaccine guidelines with them. Next, you will need to clearly inform them that your veterinarian is following these new vaccine guidelines, which trumps any special requirement they might have to vaccinate your dog. You may want to provide them with proof of a positive blood titer test for distemper and parvo, if they persist in their demand for additional vaccines. More on titer testing later...



If your boarding kennel fails to see your request as reasonable in light of the information you have brought to its attention, you can be certain that its vaccine policy is not about protecting your dog—The kennel just doesn't want to be blamed if your dog gets sick! In other words, it is stuck on the idea that vaccines will prevent dogs from getting sick. In reality, your dog is most likely to fall ill due to the stress of being shoved into a caged, deprived of exercise, and feeling abandoned!

You must realize that all dogs left at boarding kennels suffer from being away from home, and you may be unpleasantly surprised when you return to claim your stressed out dog. Complaints of kenneled dogs not eating and/or developing a nasty bout of diarrhea are common. Worse yet, some dogs become ill enough to require veterinary care. You would be wise to opt for a pet sitter instead.

Day care centers are a much better option if your dog enjoys the company of other dogs and if, again, you can get past any outdated vaccine policy. However, you may want to concede if there is a requirement for a kennel cough vaccine, commonly referred to as bordetella. Remember that bordetella is now considered to be a non-core vaccine for two reasons: it does not provide strong protection against kennel cough, and kennel cough is not considered a serious disease. Since it is an upper respiratory infection that can be caused by several different viruses or bacteria, it has been difficult to develop a fully protective vaccine. So, it's sort of hit or miss depending on what your dog is exposed too. If you think of it like getting a flu shot, you can understand why it is not always protective. Another difficulty with the vaccine is that any protection it is able to provide is short-lived, lasting only six months or less.

When you do opt to use this vaccine, choose the intranasal application over the injection type. Also note that the timing is important. Choose this vaccine to be given two to four weeks before you board your dog for best protection. Consider updating the bordetella vaccine every six months if your dog is enrolled in day care activities or is frequently groomed.

### ***Agree to Sign: Hold Harmless of Responsibility Waiver***

Another option you have to avoid the vaccine trap is to offer to sign a waiver. You will need to be specific and call out the diseases that the business would not be responsible for if your dog becomes infected. Namely we are talking about distemper, hepatitis, parvo, and kennel cough (bordetella). Since rabies is mandated by state law, your dog will automatically be current on this vaccine.

A sample of a Hold Harmless of Responsibility waiver could look like this:

#### **To Whom It May Concern:**

Should my dog *name your dog* contract distemper, hepatitis, parvo, or \_\_\_\_\_ while staying at your *kennel, day care, grooming facility*, I will hold you neither financially responsible nor negligent in your duties. Therefore, I accept full responsibility and will assume the cost for any needed medical care.

## Chapter 8

# Rabies Vaccine Due Dates Controlled by State Laws

In the new AAHA guidelines, you won't find any new information about changing the vaccine protocol for rabies. That's because rabies is the only core disease that can be transmitted to humans. Rabies is classified as a zoonotic disease (transmissible from animals to humans) and so it's under the watchful eye of the Center for Disease Control (CDC). Starting in the 1940s, states began passing rabies control acts to enforce the vaccination of companion dogs.

By the 1960s, rabies was diagnosed more frequently in wildlife (raccoons, skunks, and bats) than among domestic dogs. Statistics prove that you are more likely to be hit by lightning than to contract rabies from the bite of a domestic dog. And while it is reassuring to note that the widespread use of the rabies vaccine has virtually eliminated our dogs from the risk of spreading this dreaded disease to humans, dogs are now at risk from being over vaccinated with this vaccine!



Now here is something you probably don't know. There are both one-year and three-year vaccines being sold that are actually the same product! That's right—the one-year vaccine has the same duration of immunity (DOI) as the three-year. Which vaccine do you want for your dog? The three-year of course!

Note: If the pharmaceutical company labeled its product as a one-year vaccine, you must repeat the vaccine again one year later to satisfy the legal requirements of state laws. You must avoid this vaccine trap!

### ***Know Your State Law***

If your state has approved the use of a three-year vaccine, there is absolutely no medical reason your vet should be using a one-year rabies vaccine—other than to satisfy a hungry bank account.

To defend your dog against needless over vaccination, it's important that you know the rabies requirement in your state. Most states have accepted the three-year vaccine, but this is not the end of the story. It is widely believed that the rabies vaccine has an actual DOI for at least seven years. Once again, it is the same old problem with how a vaccine is labeled for use. There is simply no requirement to label any vaccine for longer than a one-year period. It is most cost-effective for drug companies to test the effectiveness of a vaccine for one year and then be granted a one-year label.

To show that a vaccine can be effective for up to three, five, seven years or for life would require ongoing testing at longer intervals, driving up costs. So, here is another prime example of corporate profits driving research. Stockholders win and you pay the price. To say it another way, you and your dog are the losers!

**FACT:**

**Rabies is the only vaccine required by state law.  
You decide on all the others!**

***Meet Dr. Jean Dodds, Staunch Advocate of a Seven-Year Rabies Vaccine***

Dr. Jean Dodds and Dr. Ronald Schultz, the two renowned pioneers of veterinary vaccine research, have teamed up to volunteer their time to develop five- and seven-year rabies challenge studies.

The studies are to be financed by The Rabies Challenge Fund Charitable Trust, a tax-exempt organization founded in 2005 by pet vaccine disclosure advocate Kris L. Christine of Maine, and will be performed by Dr. Schultz at the University of Wisconsin. To encourage the undertaking of this vital research, The University has waived its usual 48 percent overhead fee for these studies.

## ***The Rabies Challenge Fund Charitable Trust***

The challenge studies will determine the DOI (duration of immunity) conveyed by the canine rabies vaccine, with the goal of extending the interval for boosters to five, and then to seven years.

*According to Dr. Dodds,*

*This is one of the most important projects in veterinary medicine. It will benefit all dogs by providing evidence that protection from rabies vaccination lasts at least 5 years, thereby avoiding unnecessary revaccination with its attendant risk of debilitating adverse reactions.*

Researchers believe the rabies vaccine causes the most and worst adverse reactions in animals and concur that it should not be given more often than is necessary to maintain immunity. Adverse reactions to rabies vaccination can include various autoimmune diseases affecting the thyroid, joints, blood, kidney, and liver; anaphylactic shock; aggression; seizures; epilepsy; and cancerous tumors at injection sites.

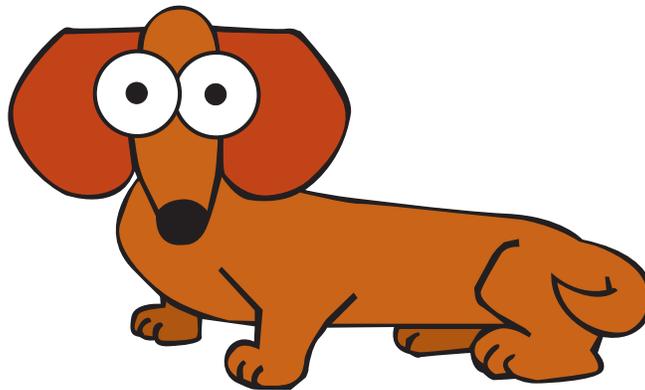
*Dr. Schultz states that,*

*Showing that a vaccine for rabies can provide 5 or preferably 7 years of immunity would have great significance not only in controlling rabies but more importantly in reducing the adverse vaccine reactions that can occur in dogs and cats after vaccination.*

More information on The Rabies Challenge Fund and the concurrent five- and seven-year challenge studies it will finance can be found at the fund's website:

<http://www.rabieschallengefund.org>

Donations are gratefully accepted to help fund this critically important research.



## Chapter 9

# When You Should Not Vaccinate

**You will want to avoid vaccinating your dog altogether if...**

- Your dog has a history of severe adverse vaccine reactions;
- Your dog has had a serious prior illness (autoimmune diseases jump to the top of this list) that is likely to be aggravated by a vaccine booster;
- Your dog is suffering from a serious illness (such as cancer) and/or is terminally ill and housebound.

If any of the above fits your dog's state of health, just say no thanks to any vet aiming a needle at him. But if your dog has been summoned to renew his county license and you've received a demand note to update his rabies vaccine, you will need to respond or face an unpleasant fine. Don't panic, you have a secret weapon called a letter of exemption...



## ***How to Challenge a Rabies Vaccine Due Date***

You may find that you need to ask your vet to submit this letter on behalf of your dog. If so, give your vet a little praise for this cooperative effort! Using the proper business letterhead, (listing your vet's name, address, phone number, and the date), have your vet list your dog's name, your name as the dog's owner, and the dog's sex, age, and breed.

### **Letter of Exemption: Sample**

The body of the letter could look something like this:

[dog's name] has a documented history of severe adverse vaccine reactions...

[dog's name] has a serious prior illness likely to be aggravated by a rabies booster...

[dog's name] suffers from an illness that could be exacerbated by a rabies booster...

Given [dog's name] medical condition, future rabies vaccinations would put my patient at undo risk and would likely jeopardize his/her compromised immune system. Because of the recognized potential for this vaccine to cause harmful effects, and due to the reasons I have described, I recommend that [dog's name] be exempt from the rabies booster vaccination.

**In some instances it may be necessary to measure a rabies vaccine titer to send along with this letter.**

## ***Proposed Future Guidelines May Look Like This:***

Core vaccines are given starting between the ages of 8 and 12 weeks and only repeated once again at 12 or 16 weeks respectively.

Additional core vaccines are given only once more between the ages of 6 and 12 months (fully recognizing they provide lifelong immunity) and never again.

Rabies will only be given every seven years.

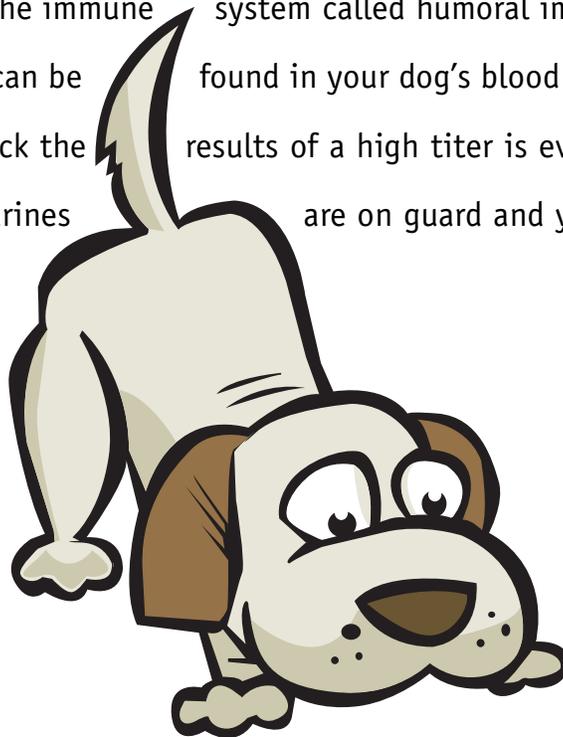


## Chapter 10

# The Truth About Antibody Titters: Testing Immunity

When your dog shows the appropriate response to being vaccinated, his immune system will be stimulated to produce protective antibodies. These antibodies are like well-trained marines on patrol. In the event that a deadly virus like distemper, parvo, or rabies tries to attack, there is an army of “atomic” weapons waiting to destroy them. Your dog wins the battle and your money was well spent!

The level of antibodies can be measured in a titer test by taking a sample of blood. Antibodies are part of the immune system called humoral immunity. When adequate numbers of antibodies can be found in your dog’s blood sample, the test reports a high titer. Getting back the results of a high titer is evidence that the vaccine is doing its job. The marines are on guard and your dog dodges a needless needle!



Some progressive veterinarians may suggest that you test your dog to measure a titer in lieu of the knee-jerk action to revaccinate. This is certainly a step in the right direction and most certainly will curtail the practice of over vaccinating your dog—but there is more to the story. Mother Nature has also designed a secret weapon called cell-mediated immunity. Blood titers are unable to detect the special forces of your dog's cell-mediated regime. Why do you need to know this? Because if your dog has a low blood titer, he may still be protected by the stealth weapons of his cell-mediated immune system. If you are scratching your head, read on...

### ***So, Why Do Blood Titers at All?***

The best reason to test your dog's blood titer is to show that he has mounted an adequate immune response to a vaccine. Antibodies can be measured by waiting at least two weeks after your dog receives a vaccine. Between two to four weeks after your dog's last puppy shots are given for distemper and parvo, you may request that a titer be done. If your puppy has not responded to the vaccines (low titer) you should revaccinate and test again.

Once your puppy scores an A on his titer test, future testing is not necessary, according to Dr. Schultz:

*“I don't recommend further titer tests (later in a dog's life) because I know these vaccinations are good for a lifetime.”*

If you or your vet is uncomfortable with Dr. Schultz's recommendation, it would still be better to titer test than to vaccinate by reflex. Dr. Jean Dodds agrees and routinely performs titer testing at her lab as an alternative to revaccination.

Hemolife, a division of Hemopet, is a diagnostic laboratory offering its services to veterinarians worldwide. Your vet can get more information on titer testing here:

<http://www.hemopet.org/services.html>



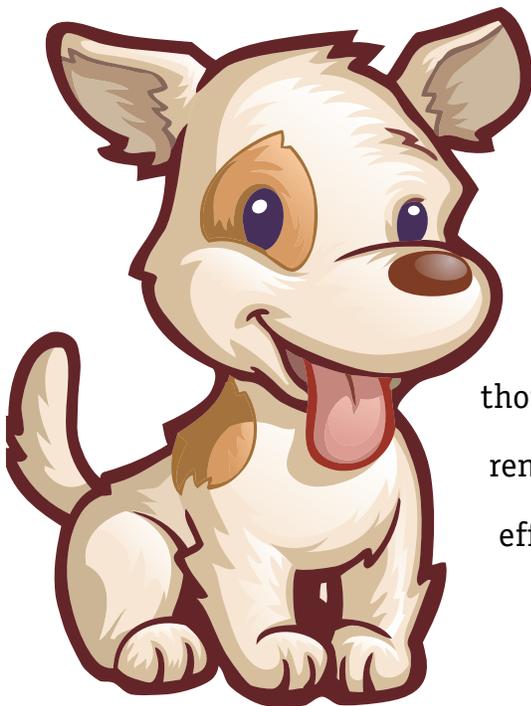
Titer testing is only done for distemper and parvo. Hepatitis is so uncommon that it is no longer believed to pose a significant threat. Titer testing can also be done for rabies, but a positive titer will not automatically exempt your dog. It is done only in cases where it is against medical judgment to vaccinate and your veterinarian has signed a letter of exemption on behalf of your dog.

## Chapter 11

# The Smart Way to Vaccinate Your New Pup

If you have acquired your new pup from a breeder or pet store, be sure to bring along documentation of all previous vaccines given by the breeder. This will help your vet determine the best vaccine schedule to follow. Remember, you must space out vaccine dates, giving boosters no sooner than three weeks after the last vaccine.

Current knowledge recommends that puppies start a vaccine schedule no sooner than 8 weeks of age. However, it must be noted that the 2006 AAHA Canine Vaccination



Guidelines of the General Veterinary Practice allows initial puppy vaccinations to be administered between the ages of 6 and 8 weeks. Most likely this is to allow puppies in high-risk environments, such as breeding operations, to possibly benefit from an earlier start date even though it is realized that maternal antibodies often render vaccines given before 12 weeks of age less effective or not protective at all.

If it were possible to shelter puppies in a protective environment that would not expose them to infectious viruses, a prudent vaccine protocol would time the initial vaccine to be given at 12 weeks and repeated only once again at 6 months. A titer would follow two to four weeks later. This scenario is actually possible if you are the lucky recipient of a backyard puppy born to a healthy family dog in your neighborhood.

## ***Puppy Vaccination Protocol for Core Vaccines***

Start the first DHP\* vaccine between the age of 8 and 10 weeks and booster three or four weeks later.

**Here are three different possible protocols:**

- DHP at 8 weeks and repeated at 12 weeks
- DHP at 9 weeks and repeated at 12 or 13
- DHP at 10 weeks and repeated at 13 or 14 weeks

*\*Dr Jean Dodds is noted for recommending that only the distemper and parvo vaccines be used. At this time, Dodds does not consider hepatitis a big enough threat to warrant the need for vaccination.*

The DHP vaccine only needs to be given twice when vaccinating your puppy between the age of 8 and 14 weeks. Keep puppies in protective environments (your own yard and perhaps puppy classes with a trainer) for at least 14 days after their second vaccine booster is given between 12 and 14 weeks.

It takes at least 14 days for your puppy to make his own protective antibodies after receiving a vaccine. Most puppies can be safely introduced to the world at around 4 months of age or after receiving their rabies vaccine.

A single rabies vaccine is given between 16 and 24 weeks. An annual booster one year later is mandated by state and/or local laws. After that, only a three-year rabies vaccine should be used. When using the protocol above, it is ideal to allow the rabies vaccine to be given at least three to four weeks apart from the DHP.

### ***Breeders Take Heed***

Puppies should *not* be vaccinated at less than 8 weeks of age, as maternal antibodies (pups get natural protection from Mom that can last until they are 12 or even up to 16 weeks of age) will neutralize the vaccine, making it ineffective. **Note:** These protective maternal antibodies (a gift of the colostrum found in mothers milk) allow a four-week window (somewhere between eight and twelve weeks) in which to start a vaccination program.

Vaccine dates should be spaced out at three to four week intervals for vaccines to be most effective and to minimize possible harmful effects. Give only the DHP (distemper, hepatitis, parvo). If your vet does not carry this vaccine, substitute by using the DHPP (distemper, hepatitis, parvo, parainfluenza) or politely ask that a DHP vaccine be made available.

NEVER give a repeat or new vaccine if your puppy was vaccinated less than 14 days earlier. It will be neutralized by the earlier vaccine. There is no exception to this rule. The ideal vaccine interval is to space out vaccines three to four weeks apart.

## Chapter 12

# How To Easily Spot a Vaccine Junkie and Just Say NO!

You must check with your vet to see which vaccines are being used. If your vet has not adopted the new vaccine guidelines, chances are the DHP vaccines won't be available. Here are just two examples of drug companies that manufacture core vaccines that carry a three-year label:

Intervet's line of vaccines trademarked as Continuum

<http://www.continuum3.com>

Merial's line of vaccines trademarked as PUREVAX

<http://www.merial.com>



Most experts agree in the wisdom that several vaccines should not be given on the same day. There is less chance of an adverse reaction, and if your dog shows a reaction, there is no confusion about which vaccine (DHP or rabies) was the culprit.

**Ask your vet which vaccines he recommends before you schedule your dog's next vet exam...If you get a lot of slack—don't go back!**



Watch out for the old-time favorite and still all too popular vaccine combination, the DHLPP, commonly referred to as a 5 in 1 vaccine. In order, these letters stand for distemper, hepatitis, leptospirosis, parainfluenza and parvo. This combination can no longer be recommended since it contains two of the noncore vaccines, leptospirosis and parainfluenza.

How do you avoid this “combo wombo,” as Dr Dodds refers to it? Avoid products that lump together several different vaccines into one. Using vaccine jargon there are three types of vaccines:

**Monovalent:** contains a single virus

**Bivalent:** contains two different viruses

**Multivalent:** contains three or more viruses.

The ideal vaccine combo is the DHP, referred to as a 3 in 1 vaccine, because it contains only the core vaccines.

**Important side note:** Other trusted vaccine manufacturers, like Novartis, have reported that their standard vaccines can also be safely used as three year vaccines despite one-year label claims. Be sure that your veterinarian is purchasing vaccines from companies that will stand behind this three year warranty. Although the newer vaccines mentioned above carry a three-year label—be aware that you will pay more for them due to the increased cost to meet additional label requirements.

### ***Banfield Pet Hospital—Treating Your Pet Like Family?***

If you seek veterinary services from this corporate giant, be prepared to ward off a full assortment of fancy vaccines, both non-core and not recommended. Banfield has a “one dog gets them all” approach to vaccinations. In fact, any vaccine they recommend is stamped *Declined* in your dog’s medical record if you reject their standard protocol. No doubt this generic scare tactic approach offers up healthy corporate profits. But how do you feel about their company slogan: “*Treating your pet like family?*”

### ***Adult Core Vaccination Reminder***

At 1 year of age, your dog receives his adult status. That is a flash of time compared to 18 years for us humans! If your dog did not receive a DHP booster after age 6 months, you will need to booster this vaccine now. Also expect to booster the rabies vaccine, but realize that both these vaccines do not need to be given on the same day. You should allow three to four weeks between vaccine dates. While this might be a little inconvenient, it may be worth your trouble.

On your dog's second birthday, give him the gift of a titer test if you have not already done so. Remember, once you prove immunity with a titer, there is no logical argument for repeating the DHP vaccine. There is also no real reason to keep repeating titers unless it helps you sleep better at night!

Review the section on titers if you are feeling insecure about this and remember the words of the esteemed Dr Schultz:

*“Dogs vaccinated with a modified live core vaccine just once again after their 12 week birthday are likely to be immune to these diseases for life.”*

## Chapter 13

# Get Annual Examinations, NOT Annual Vaccinations

In truth, once your dog has received an adequate number of vaccinations, keeping your dog healthy is more a reflection of an optimum diet, regular exercise, and routine health exams. Veterinarians need not worry about the loss of income incurred by a shrinking vaccine market. Instead of sending out vaccine reminder cards, veterinarians are encouraged to promote the benefits of routine veterinary exams once or twice each year.

See an example of an Annual Wellness Plan and encourage your vet to adopt a similar plan:

[http://www.foundersvet.com/wellness\\_plan.htm](http://www.foundersvet.com/wellness_plan.htm)

***Did you notice that vaccines are given free of charge***



## ***Common problems detected during veterinary checkups:***

- Fractured teeth and periodontal disease
- Suspicious lumps
- Ear infections
- Cataracts
- Heart murmurs
- Skin problems
- Weight loss or weight gain
- Tumors
- Anal sac problems
- Parasites

Many of these problems cannot be properly diagnosed or successfully treated without the detective skills and knowledge of a skilled veterinarian. Did you know that your vet has completed an average of eight years of study, spending four years in medical school? You are cautioned not to rely on web-surfed information or your Aunt Sally for answers...Invite your vet to be a true partner in the health and well-being of your dog!

## **My Story: Vet and Dog Lover**

Being both a dog lover and a veterinarian, I naturally share my life with two wonderful dogs. When it comes time for us to go off to work, I pack them into my car and travel down the road to my veterinary clinic. Why am I telling you this? Because with the exception of mandated rabies boosters, I no longer vaccinate them! In fact—my dogs, ages 9 and 11, have not been vaccinated for the past eight and ten years respectively. Have they been exposed to infectious diseases while hanging out at the clinic? Most likely, yes! Have they ever been ill with any of the diseases they were vaccinated for as puppies? No!

I write for dog lovers because I am just like you, a dog lover at heart. Adding my medical training and experiences as a veterinarian allows me a unique perspective. To put it simply, I understand your many dog dilemmas.

My goal is to provide you with an easy to understand medical road map. This map will deliver up-to-date, accurate information that will positively affect your dog's health. And as promised in this consult, your dog will no longer be the victim of an outdated annual vaccination regimen, nor will you fall prey to any slick vaccine ad campaigns.

**Let health be the best reward you give your dog!**



## What topics will we tackle next?

### **“How to Feed Your Dog if You Flunked Rocket Science”**

*—the smart way to feed your dog on your budget.*

(available October 2007)

### **“How to Solve the Mystery of Your Itchy Dog”**

*—get answers to your dogs allergies.*

(available December 2007)

## Afterword: Author's personal message

I was a dog lover long before my interest in veterinary medicine developed. It's been reported that my first three spoken words were *mom*, *dad*, and *dog*, although my family is unsure of the actual order. So, it was just a matter of time before my love of dogs became married to my expanding interest in medical science. However, I must credit the storyteller talents of James Herriot with my plunge into the study of veterinary medicine.

Herriot wrote about his adventurous lifelong career as a small town veterinarian in the early 1900s. I believe his inspiring stories, revealing his loving compassion, enormous dedication, and often difficult struggles to relieve the suffering of animals, were destined to jump off the pages and into the soul of a restless twenty-something young woman. After I devoured his two bestselling books *All Creatures Great and Small* and *All Things Wise and Wonderful*, my life took on a new meaning and direction. Nine years later in 1986, clothed in cap and gown, I graduated from the School of Veterinary Medicine at UC Davis, California.

So now his legacy continues as I have the privilege to share with you what I have learned in my more than twenty years of veterinary practice. Some day, I too hope to write my memoirs, touching the hearts of all animal lovers and hopefully igniting the spark of a few latent veterinarians like me, who will find their passion curled up on

the sofa one afternoon with a captivating book. However, until time affords me that luxury, I am following my passion to educate dog owners on critical issues affecting the health of today's modern dog.

It's now 2007 and with every new day we are bombarded with new information. It is easy to become confused by all the news and advertisements that are published daily or discovered while surfing the Internet. You have more choices than ever before and less time to digest information and make good decisions. That's why you will find each *30 Minute Vet Consult* to be a dependable medical road map, concisely written to help you wade through a maze of mounting information. Each consult carefully sorts out the facts from advertising fiction and separates opinion from up-to-date medical findings. Use this information to navigate through emerging medical forks in the road and necessary U-turns.

I encourage you to be an advocate for your dog during veterinary visits by empowering you with practical information in an easy to use format. Remember, I was a dog lover long before my chosen profession molded me into a veterinarian. So, expect some heated controversy over the consults that cover vaccinations and pet foods. As you will see, I am not a white coat doctor. In fact, the white coat never fit, so it hangs in the closet. Without this sterile accessory, I find it easier to break from traditions that I find to be outdated or haphazard. That being said, profits alone do not come before the best interest of my patients. Needless to say, I am not too popular with vaccine pushers or the drug reps who are always trying to get an appointment with me. Nor would I be a welcomed dinner guest at a symposium sponsored by most pet food companies.

Ultimately, the time is coming for me to put down my stethoscope and prepare for the new journey ahead. In these consults, I am privileged to remain as council to the many wonderful clients that have honored me with their trust. Thank you for your confidence. It was your trust and faith in my abilities that made my years of veterinary practice truly rewarding. And for those of you who I can only touch with my writing, it is my greatest hope I will make a positive difference in the life of your dog, too.

My road has truly been, as famously coined by the wisdom of Scott Peck MD, *The Road Less Traveled*. And so it has been paved with experience, hardship, and wisdom. Now I have the privilege to share what I have learned with my fellow dog lovers; thank you for inviting me. I hope to enrich the special bond that you share with your dog.



Paula Terifaj DVM