

Thank you to Robin Sockness for taking notes.

I attended a continuing education seminar on Saturday, March 29 by R.D. Schultz, Ph.D. who is the Professor and Chair at the University of Wisconsin School of Veterinary Medicine. (I even got the official certificate!) This week's blogs have highlighted topics discussed and included excerpts from his scientific paper entitled "Guidelines for the Vaccination of Dogs and Cats".

The most important thing to point out as a result of this seminar and reading the materials is that clearly, we as Americans are overvaccinating our animals. As he pointed out...most of the vaccines immune the pet for life (easily checked with titers) and therefore if we continue to give vaccines every year, we only work to suppress the immune system and risk disease. The comments below are typed notes from the vaccine meeting I attended on March 29, 2007: Speaker R.D. Schultz, Ph.D.

Understanding the Immune Response to Vaccines

Innate vs Acquired Immunity: A healthy immune system will take care of 90% of bacteria, parasites and some viruses. For certain things, the immune system will remember what it saw before and will respond more effectively. The immunology memory for some vaccines is for a lifetime of the dog. A dog's body remembers the Lepto vaccine for 6 months. Distemper/Parvo and Adeno vaccines are remembered for a lifetime. (this is easily proven by you running titers on your dog) Kennel Cough is not vaccine preventable, it only manages it, it is too complex to totally prevent with a vaccine. Small breed dogs are more at risk to the adverse reactions from the Lepto vaccine. Mini Dachshunds are most at risk of adverse reaction. Weimeraners tend to show the most reactions to vaccines.

Important: The rabies vaccine and lepto should NEVER be given at the same time as any other vaccine. They are the most reactogenic of any of the vaccines.

Adverse Reactions:

The following is a list of Severe Reactions that are possible following vaccinations: Vaccine injection site sarcomas, Anaphylaxis, Arthritis, polyarthritis, hypertrophic osteodystrophy, Autoimmune Hemolytic Anemia, Immune Mediated Thrombocytopenia, Thyroiditis, Myocarditis, Post vaccination encephalitis or polyneuritis, Seizures, Abortion, congenital anomalies, embryonic/fetal demise, failure to conceive

Reactions can be within minutes, months or years. Sarcomas can show up 6-7 years later. It is foolish to believe that vaccines and pesticides don't cause adverse reactions and immune deficiency diseases. Any dog who has had a seizure, should never be vaccinated again. Do not vaccinate pregnant dogs/cats.

Moderate Reactions Immunosuppression, Behavioral changes (such as sudden aggression, change in personality), Vitiligo, Weight loss, Reduced milk production, Lameness, Granulomas/abscesses, Hives, Facial edema, Atopy, Respiratory disease
Allergic uveitis (blue eye).

Mild Reactions: Lethargy, Hair loss, hair color change, Fever, Soreness, Stiffness, Refusal to eat, Conjunctivitis, Sneezing, Oral ulcers.

The immune system of a dog develops as early as 40 days of gestation and much of it is developed at birth.

There is a strong relationship between nutrition and trace minerals and the immune system. Diet: needs to contain all required nutrients. You could feed raw, but you need to know that your pet was given a complete diet, so the need to supplement is important in a "natural" diet if you don't buy premade foods.

The endocrine and neurological systems are tied in with immune system. When you give your pet a vaccine, that vaccine has a potential effect on those systems and the hematologic system.

Dr. Schultz' current endeavor includes his participation in a study regarding rabies vaccines. You can read more about it at The Rabies Challenge Fund.

Duration of Immunity: "It has been common practice since the development of canine vaccines in the late 1950's to administer them annually. The recommendation to vaccinate annually was based on the assumption that immunity would wane in some dogs, thus to ensure immunity in the population, all dogs required revaccination since it was not practical to test each animal for antibody. Little or no research has been done to demonstrate that the practice of annual revaccination has any scientific value in providing

greater immunity than would be present if an animal was never revaccinated or was revaccinated at intervals longer than one year."