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What Your Vet Doesn't Know About Distemper Could Harm Your Dog



Any vaccine given to any dog at any point in his life has the ability to cause harm. This makes it incredibly important to limit vaccinations to only those that will protect your pet. After all, the entire point of vaccination is to protect your pet from harm, isn't it?

If improved health is the true goal of your dog's vaccination program, then your vet must understand that any unnecessary vaccine should be avoided. Yet this almost never happens.

The reasons vets over vaccinate are varied: some are just unaware that they are vaccinating too often. Other vets don't believe that vaccines have the ability to harm your dog. Others just stick to outdated schedules out of comfort or habit. It really doesn't matter why dogs are over vaccinated – what really matters is that this practice is stopped.

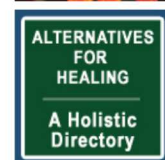
If you don't think your dog is being vaccinated too often, the following information about the distemper vaccine might offer a glimpse into how many unnecessary vaccines our dogs are exposed to.



What You Need To Know About Distemper

In a study at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, renowned veterinary infectious disease expert Dr Ronald Schultz vaccinated puppies with just one dose of distemper vaccine just four hours prior to placing the puppies in a room with distemper infected dogs. All of the puppies (which were vaccinated at 12 weeks), were protected against distemper in this challenge study.

In fact, the distemper vaccine works so well, that it can even be given up to three days post exposure to healthy puppies and still offer protection. Dr Schultz offers his expertise on the subject in the following video taken from New Canine and Feline Vaccination Guidelines: What Has Changed and Why:



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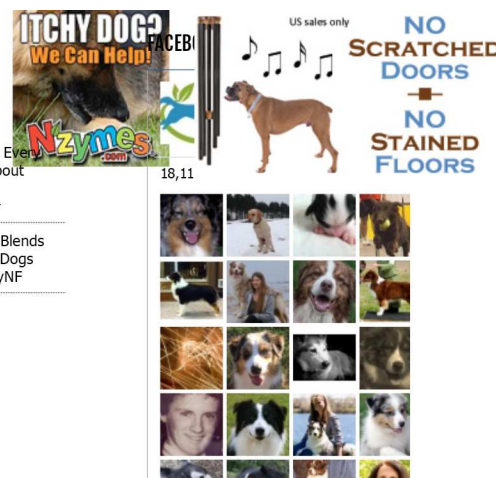
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What About Booster Shots?

Many pet owners (and some vets) believe that it takes more than one vaccine to protect a puppy. This isn't true in most cases. It only takes one vaccine to confer immunity, if delivered at the right time. Although two and even three doses of vaccine were the original recommendations made in the AAHA 2003 Canine Vaccine Guideline, Dr. Schultz's research shows that the series of vaccinations is unnecessary. Puppies vaccinated for distemper once at 12 to 16 weeks of age with a high titer vaccine have a virtually 100% chance of being protected. And that protection is most likely for life.

In 2003, The American Animal Hospital Association Canine Vaccine Taskforce warned vets in JAAHA (39 March/April 2003) that "Misunderstanding, misinformation and the conservative nature of our profession have largely slowed adoption of protocols advocating decreased frequency of vaccination ... Immunological memory provides durations of immunity for core infectious diseases that far exceed the traditional recommendations for annual vaccination."

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

"The recommendation for annual re-vaccination is a practice that was officially started in 1978," says Dr. Schultz. "This recommendation was made without any scientific validation of the need to booster immunity so frequently. In fact the presence of good humoral antibody levels blocks the anamnestic response to vaccine boosters just as maternal antibody blocks the response in some young animals."

Below is the result of duration of immunity testing on over 1,000 dogs. Both challenges (exposure to the real virus) and serology (antibody titer results) are shown below.

Table 1: Minimum Duration of Immunity for Canine Vaccines

Vaccine	Minimum Duration of Immunity	Methods Used to Determine Immunity
CORE VACCINES		
Canine Distemper Virus (CDV)		
Rockbom Strain	7 yrs / 15 yrs	challenge / serology
Onderstepoort Strain	5 yrs / 9 yrs	challenge / serology
Canine Adenovirus-2 (CAV-2)	7 yrs / 9 yrs	challenge-CAV-1 / serology
Canine Parvovirus-2 (CAV-2)	7 yrs	challenge / serology

It's important to note that this is the MINIMUM duration of immunity. These ceilings reflect not the duration of immunity, rather the duration of the studies. Dr. Schultz explains "It is important to understand that these are minimum DOI's and longer studies have not been done with certain of the above products. It is possible that some or all of these products will provide lifelong immunity."

Dr. Schultz has seen these results repeated over the years. In 2010, he published the following with newer generation, recombinant vaccines. It's important to note that not only did the vaccines provide protection for a minimum of 4 to 5 years, they did so in 100% of the dogs tested.

Table 2
Dogs vaccinated against canine distemper virus (CDV) and canine parvovirus type 2 or 2a (CPV-2, -2a) and then challenged with CDV (intravenous) and CPV-2c or -2b (intranasal/oral)

Challenge viruses	Number of dogs per group	Years since last vaccine given (average)	Type of CPV-2 vaccine component	CPV titre at PC Day 0 (average log ₂)	CDV titre at PC Day 0 (average log ₂)	Age at challenge in years: range and (average)	Outcome (% protection)
CDV-SH, CPV-2b	10	4.5	CPV-2	6.3	6.6	4–8 (6.2)	100
CDV-SH, CPV-2c	10	5.5	CPV-2	7.5	8.4	5–9 (6.8)	100
CDV-SH, CPV-2c	10	5.9	CPV-2a	7.8	8.3	7–8 (7.3)	100
CDV-SH, CPV-2c	10	4.8	CPV-2	8.2	5.1	5–9 (6.8)	100

SH, Synder Hill strain; PC, post challenge.

So Why Are Dogs Vaccinated Every Year Or Three Years?

That's a good question and here's one answer:

"Profits are what vaccine critics believe is at the root of the profession's resistance to update its protocols. Without the lure of vaccines, clients might be less inclined to make yearly veterinary visits. **Vaccines add up to 14 percent of the average practice's income**, AAHA reports, and veterinarians stand to lose big. I suspect some are ignoring my work," says Schultz. "Tying vaccinations into the annual visit became prominent in the 1980s and a way of practicing in the 1990s. Now veterinarians don't want to give it up."

What Are The Dangers Of Over Vaccination?

It's important that vaccines are only given when necessary because every vaccine has the potential to kill the patient or create debilitating chronic diseases including cancer and allergies. Below is a list of potential adverse vaccine reactions:

Common Reactions:

- Lethargy
- Hair Loss, hair color change at injection Site
- Fever
- Soreness
- Stiffness
- Refusal to eat
- Conjunctivitis
- Sneezing
- Oral ulcers

Moderate Reactions:

- Immunosuppression
- Behavioral changes
- Vitiligo
- Weight loss (Cachexia)
- Reduced milk production
- Lameness
- Granulomas/Abscesses
- Hives
- Facial Edema
- Atopy
- Respiratory disease
- Allergic uveitis (Blue Eye)

Severe Reactions triggered by Vaccines:

- Vaccine injection site sarcomas
- Anaphylaxis
- Arthritis, polyarthritis
- HOD hypertrophy osteodystrophy
- Autoimmune Hemolytic Anemia
- Immune Mediated Thrombocytopenia (IMTP)
- Hemolytic disease of the newborn (Neonatal Isoerythrolysis)
- Thyroiditis
- Glomerulonephritis
- Disease or enhanced disease which with the vaccine was designed to prevent
- Myocarditis

Post vaccinal Encephalitis or polyneuritis

Seizures

Abortion, congenital anomalies, embryonic/fetal death, failure to conceive

How Much Is Too Much?

It's well established that vaccines can be harmful and should therefore be limited to as few as possible to protect our pets. "The patient receives no benefit and may be placed at serious risk when an unnecessary vaccine is given" says Dr Schultz. He adds, "Few or no scientific studies have demonstrated a need for cats or dogs to be revaccinated."

So if the goal of vaccination is to protect animals from harm, how do the following vaccine schedules for distemper make sense when only one is needed to protect a puppy, most likely for life?

Yearly Vaccination



Any dog who is vaccinated three times as a puppy and again at a year, then annually will be vaccinated for distemper 15 times if he lives to 12. Now read Dr Schultz's research above. Most puppies are protected for distemper within hours

of vaccination and most dogs, once successfully vaccinated, are protected for life.

If your dog is vaccinated yearly for distemper, then he will receive 14 unnecessary vaccinations in his life – if he's lucky enough to survive those vaccinations for 12 years.

Triennial Vaccination



Many vets pride themselves on not vaccinating annually. Triennial vaccination, although it delivers fewer vaccinations to your dog, is just as flawed in its logic as annual vaccination. Most 12 year old dogs who are vaccinated triennially will be vaccinated eight times for distemper. While that's certainly better than 15, it's still most likely 7 times too many!

What Should Your Dog's Distemper Vaccine Schedule Look Like?



One. Uno. That's it. Some dogs may require a second distemper vaccine as puppies if maternal antibodies block the first one, but if a puppy is vaccinated after 12 to 16 weeks of age, he will most likely be protected, for life, with just one distemper vaccine.

What About The Other Vaccines?

We've just focused on distemper here. Most dogs also receive other components in their vaccines including parvovirus, coronavirus, adenovirus, parainfluenza, Lyme disease, leptospirosis, bordetella, rabies and more. Clearly, the number of unnecessary vaccines our companion dogs endure – and the potential damage they pose – are out of control. So what can you do?

Take Back Control

If the information we've presented in this article makes you think that you should lighten your dog's vaccine schedule, then do it. Don't expect your vet to do it for you. And don't go to groomers, training facilities or boarding kennels that require too many vaccines. There are enlightened vets and businesses out there and your dollars would be much better spent supporting these fine people instead of the businesses who are asking you to subject your dog to an unnecessary and dangerous vaccination protocol.

Dr. Schultz summarizes his 40 years of research with the following:

"Only one dose of the modified-live canine 'core' vaccine (against CDV, CAV-2 and CPV-2)

or modified-live feline 'core' vaccine (against FPV, FCV and FHV), when administered at 16 weeks or older, will provide long lasting (many years to a lifetime) immunity in a very high percentage of animals."

Like anybody who is exposed to too many drugs, the first step is to admit you have a problem. The second step is to stop the vaccine addiction immediately. That may mean saying no to your vet or, preferably, it means finding a vet who is paying attention to the damage vaccines can cause and is using vaccines (or not using them) *to do what they were designed to do: protect your dog!*



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Lori Cote · Top Commenter · Owner-Operator at DOG GROOMER (Self Employed)

You are clearly being kind to the vets who continue to over vaccinate. I believe there are 2 reasons to explain it, ignorance or greed. Neither a quality one wants in a doctor. Makes me furious.

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Marti Schmidt · Artist at Marti Schmidt Gallery

This is an important study on over vaccination of animals.
Pass it along.
Thanks Marti

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Leslie Woodham

Over vaccination is also a problem in infants

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Csh Threenorns · Top Commenter

when I got my dog, it was unclear if he'd been given his puppy needles - I was told yes, but there were no papers and the farmer couldn't remember which vet it was had come out (where he is, vets from three different districts take turns making the rounds). I waited until he was 14mo old and boy, howdy - I won't be doing that again! he *screamed* when the stuff started going in - didn't bite the vet but banged him hard with his nose; on the hour drive home, he kept licking and licking and was panting and drooling with big eyes (was told this was a common reaction, not to worry, he's just "high strung" - border collie mix; and three days later, he'd chewed all the fur off around the injection site, which looked pink and crispy, like a bad sunburn.

never again!

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Terri Baehr · Nicolet Area Technical College

Hmmm, I am looking for opinions on this one.

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Jennifer Bell Platt · Freelance Writer at Self employed Freelance Writer

Very interesting. Hmm...

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