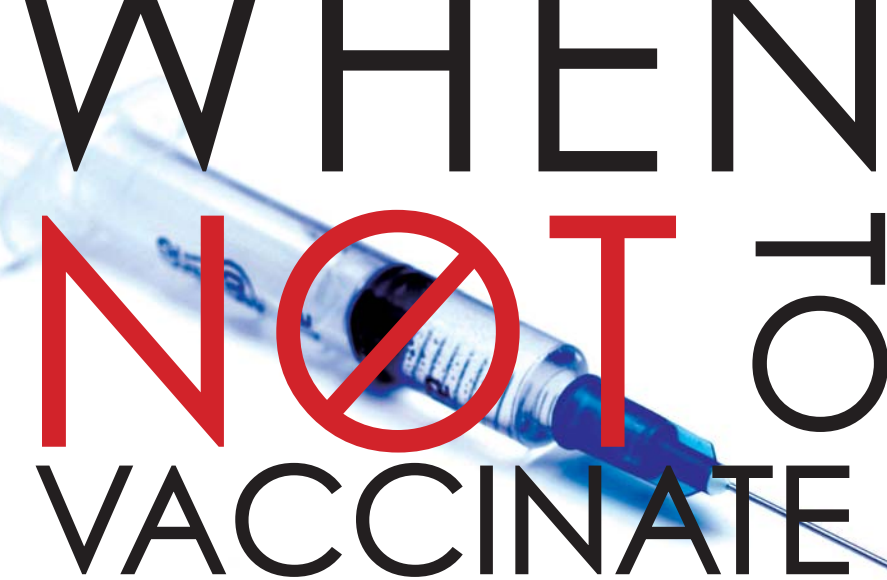


WHEN NOT TO VACCINATE



They're necessary to protect puppies against infectious disease, but yearly vaccines through adulthood are unnecessary – and in some situations are even contraindicated.

By Deva Khalsa, VMD



BRANDON, AN AUSTRALIAN SHEPHERD, was brought to me after he went into a coma following a vaccination. He had been in the intensive care unit for about a week and was now up, but was awfully shaky on his legs and not sure about life at all. Acupuncture and holistic treatments helped him a great deal, but some of the brain damage he suffered could not be repaired. He was never a normal dog again after that.

If you've ever wondered how to protect your own dog from infectious disease without subjecting him to potentially dangerous vaccinations, it's most likely you've already done so. If he had a vaccine for distemper and parvo after six months of age, he will most likely be protected for the rest of his life from these diseases. Dogs just don't need that many vaccinations to acquire full immune protection.

A TIDE OF CHANGE

Conscientious veterinarians are speaking out more and more about what can happen to dogs that are over-vaccinated. There's even a term for it – vaccinosis – commonly defined as the acute symptoms that can occur right after a vaccine. Like Brandon, many dogs have severe reactions that may debilitate them for life – or even kill them.

Many veterinarians are even more worried about the growing incidence of chronic diseases resulting from vaccination. I think you'll agree with me that too many dogs are developing allergies, cancer, irritable bowel disease, ear infections, liver and kidney problems, autoimmune diseases, compromised

Vaccinations too closely spaced interfere with a puppy's immune system response because immune components from the earlier vaccine nullify the following one.

immune systems and glandular changes. In my opinion, you can credit over-vaccination for the rise in these illnesses. There is no scientific documentation to back up the label claims for yearly vaccinations; at the same time, research unequivocally shows that these same vaccines subject a dog to the risk of many diseases.

In short, once a puppy has had his initial vaccines, annual shots are not necessary and are even detrimental. You can easily check to see if your dog remains protected from infectious disease through a simple blood titer test. I did titer tests frequently at my own practice two decades ago, and found that all dogs were showing protection. Excellent long term research has backed up my clinical experience. Veterinarians now know it's important to minimize the potential for chronic long term medical problems from vaccinations. The new mantra for vaccinations is "less is more".

WHEN VACCINES SHOULD NOT BE GIVEN

Aside from what we've already discussed, there are several specific situations and conditions in which you should not vaccinate your dog, or at the very least, take extra precautions.

- ONE -

Take care with puppy shots

Vaccinating puppies too early and too often actually prevents vaccines from having the desired effect. First of all, maternal antibodies in the mother's milk identify the vaccines as



infectious agents and destroy them before a four- to nine-week-old nursing puppy can benefit. Additionally, vaccinations too closely spaced interfere with a puppy's immune system response because immune components from the earlier vaccine nullify the following one. To prevent nullification, the ideal interval between the first vaccine and the next booster shot should be three to four weeks.

- TWO -

Don't vaccinate when dogs are stressed

If you have adopted a puppy, keep him at home for a week or more before you rush to the veterinarian to get vaccines. If you want to follow the minimal vaccine protocol mentioned in the

An advertisement for 'Walkin' Wheels' dog wheelchairs. The background is a green field with a blue sky. Three dogs are shown: a large German Shepherd, a black dog, and a small brown dog, all wearing blue and black wheelchairs. A QR code is in the top left corner. The text 'Walkin' Wheels.' is written in a large, dark blue, cursive font. Below it, the text reads: 'The fully adjustable, "one size fits all" DOG WHEELCHAIR'. Underneath, the word 'FEATURES' is written in green, followed by a list of four features: 'Folds flat for convenient travel with your dog.', 'Adjust it yourself in minutes, no tools required.', 'Ships same day.', and 'Starts at \$249.'. A dark blue button with white text says 'ORDER TODAY!'. At the bottom, the website 'www.HandicappedPets.com' and phone number '888-337-2515' are listed, along with the address 'HandicappedPets.com | 3 Bud Way Suite# 25 | Nashua, NH 03063'.

in the sidebar (right), you can get the little fellow examined as soon as you like, but wait on the vaccines. Get him on a good diet and healthy supplements. As well, if you are moving to a new home or taking your dog on a plane, be careful not to vaccinate during these stressful periods.

- THREE -

Know that certain medications suppress the immune system

Steroids such as prednisolone, prednisone and dexamethasone significantly suppress the immune system. If your dog has recently been on steroids, the vaccine won't work. Just a short bout of steroids can reduce immune function over 75%! Also note that a relatively new drug called Atopica is now being used for dogs who don't respond to steroids; it also dangerously suppresses the immune system, so you should never vaccinate a dog that is taking this drug.

- FOUR -

No vaccines for dogs with cancer or other serious illness

I do not recommend that a dog diagnosed with cancer of any kind – even if the cancer has been removed – be vaccinated at all. Dogs with liver or kidney problems, immune dysfunction problems, infections, and many other chronic diseases should also not be vaccinated. Although the rabies vaccine is required by law in most regions, the AVMA has recently released new guidelines that permit your veterinarian to write a note to the city stating your dog is ill and will not be given a rabies vaccine at this time.

If you are moving to a new home or taking your dog on a plane, be careful not to vaccinate during these stressful periods.

- FIVE -

Avoid vaccines near pregnancy

Responsible breeders should know that the vaccination of pregnant moms can result in birth defects or abortions along with a slew of vaccinosis problems in the pups later in life.

The times are changing as far as vaccines go. Literature and research discussing the adverse effects and chronic disease that vaccines cause has been available to veterinarians for almost 20 years, and research advocating reduced vaccination schedules has been around even longer. Unfortunately, many mainstream vets have not paid attention. That means you're the one who has to make educated decisions for your dog. Fortunately, many preeminent veterinarians and researchers, such as Dr. Jean Dodds, Dr. Schultz and Dr. Jordan have made it their mission to get the word out. I take my hat off to them. 🐾

THE BEST TIME TO VACCINATE

Veterinarian Dr. Patricia Jordan recommends vaccinating puppies for distemper and parvo at 12 and 16 weeks of age, with the rabies vaccine given at 20 weeks of age. Dr. Ronald Schultz, Professor and Chair of the Department of Pathobiological Sciences at the School of Veterinary Medicine, University of Wisconsin, recommends a minimum vaccination protocol – one DAP (Distemper/Adenovirus/Parvo) at 15 to 16 weeks, followed by a simple blood titer test two to three weeks later.

