

### When to titer test

- If you do not vaccinate at all and use alternatives, then titer testing is pointless and unnecessary.
- If you are not vaccinating at all then you will already be avoiding pet services (kennels, training classes etc) that require proof of vaccination, however if for some reason you come up against a situation where vaccination is a requirement, your dog may have picked up shed vaccine in the environment that will have stimulated an antibody response. So titer testing may be an option just to check, and give you an option to use one of these services without having to vaccinate. You could also take your dog in dog walking areas (or around a vet practice where shed vaccine will be) in the few days before and on the day a titer test is to be done - this may stimulate antibodies and ensure a positive result.
- But remember - having a titer test is your choice in using a service that is available - the results do NOT require you to vaccinate. That is YOUR choice, not the choice of a man/woman in a white coat.
- Maternal antibodies will prevent a vaccine from working and wanes at different times in individual dogs. So if you do choose to vaccinate your puppy the only way to ensure the vaccine has not been prevented from working by maternal antibodies is to vaccinate after 16 weeks (in 98% of dogs). Even then, the vaccine may not have worked, since MA can wane as late as 21 weeks in the tiny minority of dogs.
- At least two weeks should be left after a vaccine is administered (at any time in your dog's life) before a titer test is done.
- Once titers have been gained, then your dog is immune for years (and most probably for life).
- Re-vaccination is NOT required at any time in your dog's life if you have titers. The 3 year+ protocol the WSAVA state is no more often than 3 years, meaning that if you do choose to re-vaccinate it could be 4, 5 years, or more etc, or no re-vaccination needed at all.
- To titer test again at regular intervals is only ever to do with someone else's rules (such as proof of immunity with things like boarding), it is not whether your dog is actually immune or not.
- Despite kits like the VacciCheck having a positive/negative results procedure, if you have ANY reading at all, then it confers immunity. You cannot have partial immunity - you either have immunity or not.
- It could also be in cell memory (and possibly show a nil reading on a titer test) so if you've had previous levels showing then that will still stand and re-vaccination is not required.

- Vaccines are licensed for use 'in healthy animals only' (and there are several other areas where vaccination is contraindicated). You may have cause to titer test, for example to get a certificate to prove immunity to board your dog, but if vaccination is indicated by the test you should not re-vaccinate if your dog is not healthy as that is contraindicated and could harm (or kill) your dog. Many vets still continue to ignore this fact and don't connect the ensuing illness/death with the fact they have vaccinated an unhealthy dog and shouldn't have done. The bottom line is that it is YOUR responsibility to ensure he/she is not put in harms way.
- Vaccination does not mean immunity. There are a number of reasons why a vaccine may not work - if your dog has been vaccinated, and then at an appropriate time you have a titer test done and it shows a nil reading then to keep on re-vaccinating may be pointless. Some dogs never respond to some vaccines. The old veterinary practice of repeating vaccination to try to 'get it to take' is pointless and dangerous. If your dog is a non-responder it is a non-responder, and no amount of vaccination will change that.

So, when to titer test? Only when you have an actual need to do so.