



Pet Welfare Alliance

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Is YOUR pet at risk? The Basic Facts

Re-Vaccination Guidelines for Dogs and Cats

Core diseases: Dogs - distemper, infectious hepatitis (adenovirus) and parvovirus.

Cats - feline panleukopenia (feline infectious enteritis/FPV), feline herpesvirus-1, and feline calicivirus.

- Most dogs and cats will acquire immunity for many years against the core diseases from their puppy/kitten vaccines, and probably lifelong immunity.
- Re-vaccinating an already immune animal will NOT 'boost' or add any further benefit.
- The last of the puppy/kitten series should be given at 14 to 16 weeks (due to the presence of maternal antibodies that will cancel out the vaccine).
- Current core vaccination for a puppy/kitten is defined as a primary course of vaccines plus a 12-month booster. Current core vaccination for an adult animal is defined as revaccination no more frequently than every 3 years.
- For owners who choose not to vaccinate (either annually, 3 yearly, or not at all), titre tests will show whether circulating antibody is present to protect against these diseases. **Should antibody be present, you can be sure that the animal is immune.**
- Inexpensive (*vets charge around £29 to pet owners in the UK*) in-practice titre testing kits (called VacciCheck) are available to vets that give results in 21 minutes. Details and stockists at: <http://www.petwelfarealliance.org/vaccicheck.html>
- Non-core (anything other than those listed as 'core' above) diseases are optional (please note that there is no law that requires any vaccination at all – core and non-core simply refer to protection against the threat of disease).
- Vaccination is not without risk - from mild to fatal. Please also be aware that all vaccine data sheets state 'for use in healthy animals only' (or similar) – many vets routinely vaccinate contrary to this licensing condition. Bottom line - if your dog is not in good health he/she should not be vaccinated.

Without question, routine re-vaccination on an annual basis against core diseases is simply not necessary, of no further benefit, but is potentially harmful.

Why do something that is not only unnecessary, but also endangers the health or life of your pet?

Your vet

In 2013, nearly 4000 vets in the UK were sent a letter by the Pet Welfare Alliance that contains details and references on current vaccine guidelines and the VacciCheck in-practice titre testing kits.

Above all (unless there is a legal requirement, as with rabies) you and only you as the pet owner, has the right to decide what treatment your pet receives.

Annual Vaccines - Core Diseases:

- There is not (and never has been) any scientific back up for annual vaccination against core diseases.
- Most dogs and cats will acquire immunity for many years against the core diseases from their puppy/kitten vaccines, and probably lifelong immunity.
- Titre tests will show whether circulating antibody is present to protect against these diseases.
- If your vet tells you that an annual 'booster' is required then they are wrong, and doing something that is unnecessary. Over-vaccination has a risk attached and is against their oath of 'first do no harm'. In any case, your vet will have vaccines that are licensed for 3 years – **there is no need whatsoever to administer a one year vaccine against the core diseases** .
- If your vet tells you that the 'risk' attached is low and that reactions are rare, then they are either un-educated or relying on vaccine manufacturer's sales and marketing data (which is about 'sales' and not 'health or science'). The bottom line is that there is no need to re-vaccinate annually, so why would you see the need to put your pet at risk at all?
- Many vets are not taught the full extent of possible vaccine reactions. Reactions are not rare – they are just rarely reported.
- Ask your vet to use the VacciCheck titre test instead of blindly re-vaccinating.
- If they refuse, then tell them (in the nicest way) that you will go to another vet who operates using current science and not an out-dated, unscientific and potentially harmful practice.
- Details of vets who stock the VacciCheck are at:
<http://www.petwelfarealliance.org/vaccicheck.html>

The list is still being added to so you may also need to ring around to see if other vets in your area offer the VacciCheck.

If there aren't any vets in your area who currently offer the VacciCheck then don't be afraid to ask one to make it available. If you are part of a group of friends (or within a club etc) then asking as a group so the vet knows they will be able to use the whole pack of kits (they come in packs of 12), then this might make the vet more amenable to doing so.

Non-core vaccines are 'optional'

The truth is that there is no evidence to say that the Leptospirosis vaccine should be used other than where there is an actual proven risk.

Veterinary claims that Leptospirosis is 'endemic' is based on anecdote and industry sales and marketing data. A Dogs Today magazine investigation in 2006 into vaccine industry claims that Leptospirosis is endemic in the UK showed this to be scaremongering and untrue. Vaccine manufacturers provide vets with information for sales, publicity, and in the media.

UK veterinary claims that toy breeds are not any more susceptible to adverse reaction to the leptospirosis vaccine (despite WSAVA guidelines stating that fact) seems nothing but reckless and the wanton disregard for pet health.

Leptospirosis is a treatable disease in healthy dogs, and if your dog is not healthy he should not receive a vaccine anyway as this is contraindicated, as stated in all vaccine data sheets.

Kennel cough is not a vaccine preventable disease and there is no evidence that this vaccine is required at all in normal every day life.

Kennel cough is not life threatening and is easily treatable, the vaccine can cause outbreaks in kennels, and should not be given in the vicinity of immune-compromised humans (and for the initial period afterwards) as it can cause reaction in the human - the disease is similar to whooping cough and can cause cross-infection.

Your club/training class/agility etc

In 2014, over 1100 clubs around the UK were sent a letter by the Pet Welfare Alliance regarding vaccine guidelines and titre testing.

If your club/class is unaware of the scientific facts then talk to them and refer them to the actual science. If you need further advice on how to go about dealing with this or any of the issues in this leaflet then please contact us at: petwelfarealliance@gmail.com

Quite simply, if you are asked to provide proof of annual vaccination make sure you have a certificate/letter from your vet that states your pet has had a titre test that shows he/she is immune and does not require re-vaccination. The word 'booster' is misleading – re-vaccinating an already immune animal does not add any further benefit, but unnecessarily risks adverse reaction.

"a dog with active immunity to CDV/CPV-2/CAV will not develop disease regardless of its physical state! Even a puppy with MDA with a titer considered protective can not become infected/diseased. We have demonstrated that experimentally. In nature it occurs frequently in Shelters where we have severe outbreaks of CPV and/or CDV. We routinely test titers of incoming dogs. If they are adult dogs with titers we put them in with diseased dogs and they never develop disease! That is one of the advantages of the rapid on-site tests like VacciCheck, as we don't have to isolate dogs with detectable titers!!"

Dr Ron Schultz (WSAVA Vaccine Guidelines Group)

Kennels, Catteries and Home Boarding

In 2014, over 3500 boarding establishments and all licensing authorities around the UK were sent a letter by the Pet Welfare Alliance regarding vaccine guidelines and titre testing.

Many licensing authorities do not stipulate 'annual vaccination' as a licensing condition and/or do NOT demand 'annual' vaccination as a requirement for animals to be boarded.

New model conditions that many licensing authorities will adhere to are being put forward to include titre testing as an alternative to vaccination as a condition for boarding.

Many licensing authorities state 'current' as their vaccine conditions.

'Current core vaccination for a puppy or kitten is defined as a primary course of vaccines plus a 12-month booster. Current core vaccination for an adult animal is defined as revaccination no more frequently than every 3 years.

Speak to your licensing authority - many of those who have done so have received a positive outcome.

Breed, Breed Clubs & Rescue

In 2014, over 8200 breeders and rescues around the UK were sent a letter by the Pet Welfare Alliance regarding vaccine guidelines and titre testing. If you are required to re-vaccinate as a condition then talk to them and refer them to the actual science.

Insurance

All UK insurers have been sent a letter regarding vaccine guidelines and titre testing.

Pet Insurance: Very simply - if your insurance stipulates you have to vaccinate annually then go to another insurer (like www.AnimalFriends.org.uk or <http://www.healthy-pets.co.uk/>) who do offer policies where you don't have to vaccinate every year. They don't provide cover for the disease you would otherwise vaccinate against, but if you have titre tested positively then your pet is immune and doesn't need cover anyway. Not vaccinating on these policies does NOT invalidate your other cover on your insurance.

Kennel/Cattery Insurance: Cliverton Insurance (who are underwritten by Amlin UK) state: "As long as kennels/catteries comply with their local authority licensing conditions, then it is up to the individual establishment regarding vaccine policy".

So, the first thing for any boarding establishment is to check with your insurer - do they offer the same cover as Amlin? If you are not getting that cover then switch to Amlin UK, either through your own broker or by contacting Cliverton Insurance on 01328 857921. Other insurers may also offer the same benefits.

**Annual vaccination is neither necessary nor safe.
If you don't buy it they can't sell it.**

**For more information on any of these issues go to:
www.PetWelfareAlliance.org**