

Puppies! - *Be Informed!*

It is important as a new puppy owner that you try to be as informed as possible. This handout will start you on your way to a healthy happy life with your puppy. I believe there are simple steps that owners can take to maintain a healthy immune system, provide appropriate nutrition for proper development of bones, muscles, nerves, and organs. With a few simple training tips we can try to keep the puppy out of trouble. Armed with this information, I hope to make it easy to improve quality of life, and increase longevity of our new family members.

Remember – it's all about common sense, with a dose of uncommon knowledge.

VACCINATION - AN IMPORTANT SUBJECT - KNOWING ABOUT THIS WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR YOUR PUPPY

I believe in the judicious use of vaccines. We are now recognizing the importance of minimizing the number of vaccines, while still providing proper immunity. Veterinarians work to provide appropriate vaccines and vaccine schedules, tailored to each puppy's history, exposure risk, age and health status. We know that vaccines themselves can also cause health problems as they stress the immune system. They can, in some cases, even cause serious reactions and signs of the disease they are trying to prevent. So, it is not surprising that there are variations on what is recommended. But there can be some general guidelines.

Try to only give one vaccine injection at a time, and separate vaccines where possible by at least 14 days. This makes sense for several reasons. It can minimize the stress on the immune system by not bombarding it with so many vaccines. If you have a vaccine reaction, it is easy to separate out which vaccine caused the reaction if only one was given.

Vaccinate for diseases as required by law (Rabies), and only for serious diseases with a significant exposure risk to the puppy. Learn about the diseases in your area, discuss the risk and benefits of vaccination with your vet. Vaccine reactions and side effects should be part of this discussion.

Distemper/Parvo (MLV)

The efficacy of Distemper and Parvo combination vaccines is based on the age and health of the animal, and the number of vaccines given. It is not a matter of simply giving a series of 2 or 4 shots and then you're done.

A basic vaccine schedule below is a good one to discuss with your vet. It is for a healthy puppy that is kept clear of exposure for the first 9-10 weeks of life (courtesy of Dr. Jean Dodds, immunologist, Hemopet, California). If the puppy has other issues or has already had a vaccine earlier, see below.

- 9-10 weeks old give Distemper/Parvo vaccine combo (modified live vaccine)
- 14 weeks old give Distemper/Parvo vaccine combo, MLV - and you're done for at least a year.
- 16-20 weeks (or older if allowable by law) 1-year Rabies Vaccine

Then, 1 year later, get a titer test (a blood test) to see if there's still immunity for Distemper and Parvo (and prove to your groomer that there is) so you don't need to re-vaccinate. You can give the 3-year Rabies vaccine then. **DO NOT GIVE THE 1-YEAR RABIES VACCINE AGAIN!!** It is not a gentler vaccine, nor is the 3-year a stronger vaccine. They are the **SAME VACCINE**, only the label is different. Manufacturers need a 1 year label for the first time the vaccine is given because it needs to be boosted to last 3 years (and it will probably be proven to last 5-7 years soon). So the second time you give it, it lasts at least 3 years. You will over vaccinate your animal if you vaccinate for Rabies every year. Different states have different laws about how frequently the Rabies must be given, so be aware of that if the dog travels with you to a different state.

Note: If there's a problem with the titer test, feel free to fax results to me or talk to me, as some labs have problems properly interpreting them, and may make you over vaccinate... I can discuss it with them.

LONG TERM VACCINE SCHEDULE

Give the 3-Year Rabies vaccine every 3 years (by law, and if the 5 year or 7 year is approved, USE IT!), and do titer testing (blood test) for Dist/Parvo every 3 years or as needed to prove immunity to kennels, day-care, groomers, or for park or city tags.

You can buy two homeopathic remedies help detoxify vaccine reactions - Thuja and Lyssen -- and give 3-4 of the tiny pellets of each one orally 2x a day for 3 days before and 5 days after vaccination

Other common cases: Shelter dogs have probably had distemper and parvo (MLV) given between 7-8 weeks, so repeat that distemper vaccine in 3-4 weeks and then one more distemper combo should be done 3-4 weeks later (it must be after the puppy is 12 weeks old).

My Recommendation – in consultation with Dr. Jean Dodds, Immunologist, Hemopet (California):

- 3-4 weeks from first vaccine (at about 11-12 weeks old) give Distemper/Parvo vaccine MLV.
- 3-4 weeks later (after 12 weeks old) -- Same as above.
- Then at 16 - 20 weeks old (or older if allowable by law) 1-year Rabies Vaccine

Then, 1 year later, get a titer test (a blood test) to see if there's still immunity for Distemper and Parvo (and prove to your groomer that there is) so you don't need to re-vaccinate.

You can give the 3-year Rabies vaccine then.

Dr. Barbara Royal

