

IS YOUR PET BEING *over-* VACCINATED?

IT IS IMPORTANT TO VACCINATE YOUR PET.

Vaccines trigger immune responses in your pet that protect them from many highly contagious and deadly diseases. The widespread use of vaccination within the last century has prevented disease and death in millions of animals. Your pet absolutely needs to be protected from these diseases. While no vaccination offers 100% protection in every individual, by and large, they do a great job of preventing disease. Some of the vaccines, such as rabies, prevent zoonotic diseases that can be spread from infected animals to people. So by vaccinating your pet, you are protecting both the four-legged and two-legged members of your family.

HOWEVER, VACCINATION IS CONTROVERSIAL. Pick up almost any health-related journal at the news stand and you will likely see an article about the vaccine controversy in humans. Autism and ADHD are but two in a long list of brain, cardiovascular, and metabolic injuries suspected of being associated with vaccination in children. Vaccination in our pets is no different. Recently, claims of a class-action lawsuit surfaced accusing veterinarians of vaccinating pets that don't need it. The Law Firm of Childress

Duffy Goldblatt, Ltd. of Chicago, Illinois, is investigating the claim that every year over 30,000 dogs and cats in the U.S. die from adverse reactions from unnecessary vaccines.

In this article, the first in a two-part series, we'll take a closer look at this controversy.

IS VACCINATION SAFE? Most vaccines are safe and do way more good than harm. But, there is a down side. According to the American Veterinary Medical Association, vaccine reactions may be as frequent as 1 in 1000 pets. Most vaccine reactions are mild and cause itching, hives, swelling, and temporary nausea. It is often hard to tell if this behavior is really vaccine-induced or from the stress of going to the clinic to get the vaccine.

Serious reactions can and do occur. Full-blown anaphylactic reactions, while rare, are life threatening. In cats, a malignant cancer called fibrosarcoma has been proven to be caused by vaccination. Vaccines have also been linked to autoimmune diseases in dogs that cause anemia, platelet problems,

and joint disease. No one knows for sure why it happens, but it is thought that post-vaccine immune stimulation may occur as a consequence of an overzealous immune system reaction to the vaccine. Regardless, immune-mediated reactions are life-threatening and awful.

THE BOTTOM LINE

No doubt vaccinations have saved the lives of millions of our furry family members. Your pet absolutely needs to be protected from these killer diseases. But, vaccines are associated with some significant problems and the benefit of the vaccine must outweigh the risk of the vaccine. The choice as to which vaccines need to be given and when must be made on an individual basis with careful consideration of your pet's specific age, breed, familial history and lifestyle. One fact is clear, pets should not be over-vaccinated. Consult with your veterinarian to discuss the individual needs and the best course of action for your pet!

MORE IN THIS SERIES:

PART 2: THE VACCINATIONS YOUR PET REALLY NEEDS & WHEN

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AND INDIVIDUALLY-
TAILORED VACCINATION
RECOMMENDATIONS

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