

The vaccination debate

Just when the yearly vaccinations started is hard to locate; but thankfully there are a few good veterinarians who are questioning and standing for the rights of our dogs. It is likely that the yearly vaccines stemmed from an understanding that this meant a constant cash flow. After years of this surefire money making business; how does one stop a monumental cash flow? Not an easy task for anyone to undertake but there are a few who have and the list is growing daily. With change comes controversy; so for the average canine guardian it tumultuous waters.

The canine vaccination debate is highly controversial but definitely worth your time and effort with regards to researching. I have discovered lately that the whole controversy surrounding vaccines is not as widely spread as I had thought it was. Being that I am submerged in the world of dogs; many of the things that are discussed daily amongst us (dog people) are not commonly discussed or even thought about by the average canine guardian. Most of us grew up learning that unless our dog was sick and needed extra veterinary care; we made our yearly trip to the vet office for their annual shots. Our dogs received their check up; a quick once over, a booster and rabies shot. How times have changed; there is a whole lot more to know about getting shots for your dog now, and so much to think about.

I have to admit it can be mind boggling as you research the whole subject of yearly vaccinations. When you start out you will be guided down two completely different paths. One direction is that of the diehard yearly vaccine givers and the other direction are the ones who are thinking alternatively and running titers. I stand on the alternative side; and when I began my research on the subject I dug in deep leaving no story unturned. Sadly there is a lot of information out there to support the idea that we have indeed been doing more harm than good with these annual shots. I want you to think for a moment; when was the last time you had a booster shot? If you are like most people who are not travelling to far off exotic places then it has been a lot of years. More than likely it was not since you were a

child that you have received a vaccination booster. So why then would our dogs need a shot each and every year?

Over the years I have had many of my training clients gasp as they realized that their dog was overdue for their annual vaccination. Somewhere along the way we were given this sense of urgency about vaccinations and our dogs. Our dogs' vaccinations do not run out on the day that their next shots are due; they don't work on early diminishing coverage. But how is one to know whether your dog has good immunity as the year goes ticking by? Titers. Titer may not be a word that you have heard of before but it is a word that is becoming much more common in the world of our dogs.

Titer: the strength of a solution as determined by titration with a standard substance.

A titer test is done by drawing a small blood sample from our dog and testing the level of immunity within that blood to certain diseases. If the level is good then the dog does not need a booster and receives a print out of that titer test.

A dog who is continually given vaccines when their body is already immune; can go through many numbers of side effects from immediate to long term. Each dog is entirely individual and what works for one may be deadly to another. The titer test is the best and safest way to know whether your dog is immune or not. There are many different titer tests available; so ask your vet if they do titer testing. If they don't offer titer testing then you might want to have a look around and find a Veterinarian who does. Your dog is worth it.