



## **CANINE AND FELINE VACCINES AND VACCINATION PROGRAMS**

Long standing conventional practice has been to vaccinate every year, usually with the pet's annual wellness check-up. Frequency of vaccination is now based on scientific information, and the accumulated evidence indicates that all vaccination protocols used in the past are no longer appropriate.

"We know now that giving annual boosters when they are not necessary has the client paying for a service which is likely to be of little benefit to the pet's existing level of protection against these infectious diseases. It also increases the risk of adverse reactions from the repeated exposure to foreign substances."<sup>1</sup>

Vaccines *do* play an important role in the animal's welfare. They are necessary and, when applied in the correct format, effective and beneficial to the animal. It is important to tailor an appropriate vaccine regimen for the individual animal. There are also alternatives to vaccines for previously vaccinated animals.

### **Alternatives to Current Vaccine Practices**

1. Measuring serum antibody titers
2. Avoiding unnecessary vaccines or over vaccinating
3. Not vaccinating sick pets, those with a fever, and injured animals, or those with current autoimmune disease signs such as skin or food allergies
4. Tailoring a specific minimal vaccination protocol for cats and dogs of breeds or families known to be at increased risk for adverse reactions
5. Starting the vaccination series later, such as at nine, ten, or more weeks of age when the immune system is better able to handle antigenic challenge, if the dam is properly vaccinated
6. Alerting the caregiver to pay particular attention to young animal's behavior and overall health after second, or subsequent boosters
7. Avoiding revaccination of individuals who already have experienced a significant adverse event. Littermates of affected animals should be closely monitored after receiving additional vaccines in a series, as they too, are at higher risk

***We look forward to discussing with you an optimal and compliant vaccine program that will meet the unique needs of your cat or dog.***

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<sup>1</sup> W. Jean Dodds, DVM and Ronald D. Schultz, PhD, "All About Vaccine Issues & Vaccination", June 23, 2012