



Crow River
Animal Hospital
& Dental Clinic

Friday Fun Facts – Number 35:2010

**Melissa Shelton DVM – Vaccinations – Current Viewpoints – 2010 – Part II
Rabies**

Disclaimer: All of the information provided here is intended for educational purposes. The information is not intended to diagnose, treat, or prescribe for any illness. Please seek the advice of a qualified health care professional in your area of concern if you or your pets have a health challenge.

This article is a continuation from a past Friday Fun Fact, where we started to discuss vaccinations. Please go back to “Vaccinations – Canine Distemper” to get an understanding of the base of information that was presented previously.

Rabies is a difficult area to discuss, as it is fraught with many legal aspects. Everyone must know what their own individual requirements are – for their City, County, Township, or State. Unfortunately, it is the owner’s responsibility to know what is required of them – not the veterinarian. Every city may have a different legal requirement for rabies. Unfortunately, I have found that some of these laws have not been created by or with a veterinarian or with any seeming medical knowledge at all. There are towns with simply archaic philosophies on vaccinations, with no exclusions for not vaccinating in the face of health conditions. If you live in a town like this – I encourage you to get pro-active. Start doing things in your community to change the rabies laws, especially to be able to exclude a pet from vaccination when health reasons mandate it. There are many towns that will accept a letter from a veterinarian stating that “for health reasons – the veterinarian is not recommending further vaccinations for this pet”.

The Rabies Challenge Fund is a wonderful site and way to learn more about vaccinations and the Rabies Duration of Immunity studies. Please go to this website for more information www.rabieschallengefund.org.

So what if you are in the position that you have to vaccinate for rabies? What do you need to know?

Here is what I currently recommend:

Puppies and kittens: Most holistic minded people will agree that we should wait until puppies and kittens are a bit older to vaccinate for rabies. For most, this will mean between 4-6 months of age – but even later is a popular recommendation. There is actually a little bit of controversy as to if a single rabies vaccination actually protects a puppy or kitten their first year. As most vaccines need to have a booster...why would rabies be any different? So there may be a certain population of animals that are not actually protected from rabies from their initial first rabies shot. These pets would only get adequate protection after their booster a year later. An interesting perspective! Not that I will begin to recommend boosting rabies shots the first year...but I wonder how this may affect the future of how we vaccinate for rabies. Certainly something to watch as we move forward.

In general, I try not to give the rabies vaccine at the same time as other vaccinations. I feel that the immune system does better dealing with one virus entity at a time. So if your pet is scheduled to receive a distemper shot – do not give the rabies vaccine on that same day. I usually wait 1-2 months after the distemper series is completed to give the rabies shot. This is the same for dogs and cats. In adult animals – alternating years that a rabies is given from the year that the distemper is given is ideal in my practice.

After a puppy or kitten gets its first rabies shot – it is “typical” to booster the rabies vaccination 1 year later. After this “second” rabies shot – you are generally allowed to vaccinate every 3 years, depending on the licensing of your vaccination.

Picking Your Vaccinations: It is very important to me to choose the “least toxic” vaccinations on the market to vaccinate with. Personally, I pick Merial Imrab 3TF for dogs and Merial Purevax Rabies for cats. I think we should all ask veterinarians which brands they use and why. I can tell you the reason for each and every purchase and product in my vet clinic. If I don’t have a reason for using a product, other than, “we always have used that one”, or “it was on sale” – then obviously I haven’t put much thought into it. My reason for picking the Imrab 3TF – is that it is licensed for 3 years and that it is Thimerosal Free. So after a dog has had its first rabies shot – upon the next booster (generally a year

later) we can legally say that this vaccination will last for 3 years. Then, it is also Thimerosal Free – so this means that there is no mercury additive in the vaccination. At least it is a start!

Mercury or Thimerosal is a common adjuvant that is added to vaccinations. Adjuvants are the toxic chemicals added to vaccinations to stimulate the body to mount an immune reaction to the vaccine. Generally these are pretty nasty ingredients, including aluminum, but companies are not required to tell us what they are – and they are protected by being “proprietary information”. Basically, companies are not required to tell us how they are poisoning us as a trade secret – nice!

For cats, the Purevax Rabies is the only rabies vaccination on the market that does not contain any adjuvant. However, it is only currently licensed as a one year vaccination. There is some discussion as to whether it is better to vaccinate “legally” on a yearly basis with a vaccine that does not contain adjuvants, or to vaccinate every three years with a vaccine that does contain adjuvants. In our township, we are not required to have cats vaccinated for rabies. Probably due to all of the barn cats in our farming community – they could never enforce such an ordinance. So I feel fortunate that I am not forced to hold up to any legal requirements, and can purely base my vaccination choices on what is best for the pet, and not for the “law”. So I can still vaccinate my cats with a Purevax rabies if I feel they need it. However, I am not held to any requirement on how often I have to booster it.

When NOT to Vaccinate: I am continually amazed at how many pets come to our practice for a holistic consultation, and they have been recently vaccinated – even with a current health concern. I strongly believe that if there are *any* health problems, that this is a pet that should probably never be vaccinated again. I also do not like to vaccinate at the same time as a spay or neuter surgery. I just feel that the body is better equipped to heal without the added burden of also asking it to respond to a vaccination. Issues like chronic allergies, parasites, gastrointestinal problems, chronic ear infections, mange/mites, skin infections etc... indicate a dysfunction in the immune system in my eyes. So, asking an immune system that is already not functioning normally – to mount a proper immune response to a vaccination is just plain stupid in my opinion.

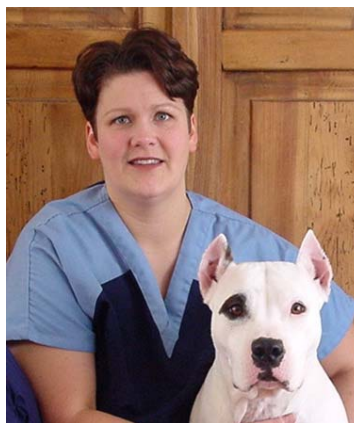
Detoxification and holistic support for animals receiving vaccinations is also important – and will be covered in future newsletters.

This is a very long subject to cover, and one best done in small pieces!
Recommendations for kennel cough, feline leukemia, and Lyme disease...are still
to be covered. Stay tuned for more on this subject!



Feel free to contact our office or visit our website for more information on how
you can use holistic care for your furry, feathered or finned family.
Consultations are available by email and phone to help you to care for the
animals in your life naturally, even if you are far away, and not able to come to
our "physical location".

*"Mother Nature gave us the gift of healing. Providing our bodies with the nutrients,
substances, and care required to heal, lies in our own actions."*



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