



Brogholme

Bernese Mountain Dogs



Vaccinations

By now, most in-tune dog owners know that vaccines are damaging to their pets. But, at the same time, they fear their dog getting one of the diseases that there is a vaccine for. So, the real question is, do the benefits of the vaccines outweigh the risks?

The dangers of vaccinating

Firstly, let's see what the risks of using vaccines are. Is it just a lot of hype or is real damage being caused by vaccinating?

Vaccines have been associated with a wide range of problems, both behaviourally and health-wise. It may be an instantaneous allergic reaction to the vaccine itself or some other blatantly obvious harm such as Autoimmune Haemolytic Anaemia or encephalitis. Or the damage may be more hidden such as behavioural problems linked to an otherwise unexplained increase in fear/aggression. Vaccines have also been blamed for such chronic diseases as arthritis, epilepsy, thyroid disease, autoimmune disease, diabetes, allergies (to food or environment), skin problems and bowel disorders including IBD/IBS. Moreover, tumours have been found at the site of vaccine injections in some animals. Additionally, the vaccine may actually cause the disease it was supposed to prevent!

This is quite a lot to take in so pause a moment and reread the previous paragraph. This isn't just hype. It can be backed up with various studies and heaps of anecdotal evidence. Vaccines are the cause of a lot of problems we see in our pets today. Have you been the proud owner of a confident, out-going puppy who starts having fear issues after her puppy shots? The puppy who normally took everything in her stride is now afraid of things such as umbrellas, bicycles, prams and is hand-shy of strangers. She is even wary of people she knows and nervously backs off. Later on this puppy develops multiple ear infections, itchy skin and digestive troubles such as lack of appetite, weight loss and bouts of watery diarrhoea. This happened with my first Bernese, Tika, and has made me wary of vaccines. Thanks to homeopathy, Tika is now well on the road to recovery.

Do vaccines prevent disease?

The short answer to that is no, the immune system does. The vaccine works on the theory that if the animal is exposed to the disease, the immune system will create antibodies and not succumb to the disease if exposed to it at a later date.

That much is correct. The problem with vaccines is that firstly they by-pass the dog's primary line of defence - the mucous membranes in the nose and mouth. Dogs should build up their immunity naturally by sniffing areas other dogs have been. This way they receive microscopic amounts of the disease into their system the natural way. Their body mounts a defence and the dog develops immunity without becoming ill in any way. This is called "street immunity" and experts say that in preventing disease it's at least as effective as vaccines are, possibly more so.

The second problem is the other ingredients in the vaccine. Cells from such creatures as monkeys, cows, sheep, ducks, chicken and rabbit as well as aborted human foetal tissue are completely foreign to a dog's bloodstream. Other more dangerous ingredients are also contained in vaccines, such as mercury, formaldehyde and antifreeze.

Combination vaccines assault an animal's body with a variety of diseases at one time. A dog would never naturally come in contact with 5 or more diseases at the exact same moment in time. This has caused some people to reconsider and give vaccines which only contain one disease. However, even this is unnatural and bypasses the body's in-built defences in the nose and mouth. These act as filters but are totally ignored by injecting the disease straight in to the dog.

Many concerned people fear their puppies coming down with Parvovirus or Distemper. But where did Canine Parvo come from? It is not a "wild" disease. It was created when the wild-type Feline Parvovirus was adapted to canine cells during the production of a live FPV vaccine. This disease was made because of vaccine-production. As regards distemper, Dr. Ron Schultz Ph.D. (professor and chair of pathobiological sciences at the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Veterinary Medicine) is reported as having said that distemper would have died out years ago if we hadn't vaccinated our dogs. The vaccine regime is keeping the virus in the ecosystem.

Did you know that the Leptospirosis vaccine has more adverse effects reported than all other canine vaccines combined? What about Kennel Cough? A lot of people fear their dog getting this at a show. But the kennel cough complex (bordatella, parainfluenza, CAV-1) is a set of treatable diseases similar to a cold. Would you vaccinate your child against the common cold before letting him go to a party? Of course not! You know that even *if* he catches that cold, he'll be fine in a few days and it's not worth the risk of the damage the vaccine could cause. It's the same with a healthy dog.

Truly healthy dogs will easily fight off any disease or parasite it may come in contact with. So it's up to us, as their loving owners, to ensure they are as healthy as can be. We need to help strengthen their immune systems, not compromise it by vaccinating them.

Alternatives

So what *should* I do to prevent disease if I don't vaccinate?

First and foremost, make your dog the healthiest dog he can be. Feed him the best SARF diet you can (see feeding article). Keep him toxin free; no chemicals in, on or around him. That means no harsh chemical flea or tick preventatives or wormers. It means not using lawn chemicals or harmful cleaning products near him. Only use a gentle, chemical-free shampoo on him. Build up his health by getting him treated constitutionally by a professional classical homeopath.

The other thing that is absolutely essential is education. Figure out which disease you are most concerned about and learn everything you can about them. Find out what the early symptoms are, how long the incubation period is and so on. Have supplies on hand that can help sustain the pup until you get him to the vet. All of this is vital whether you vaccinate or not.

For my own piece of mind, I decided to learn about alternative and natural treatments. I chose to study classical homeopathy as I believe it to be a very powerful cure with no side-effects if used correctly. I have taken 3 courses so far and can use my training to treat my dogs for certain conditions should the need arise. I have learned how to treat Parvo, Distemper and Kennel Cough among other things. I have all the necessary remedies to hand also. Thankfully, I have never had to treat an animal with these conditions but I have the information there if one of our dogs does get ill. You can learn more about classical homeopathy on this e-group which I highly recommend - <http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/ClassicalHomeopathyPets>

Talking to other non-vaccinators helps too. They can help you set your mind at ease. They can also reassure you and give you their experiences. I know that was something that helped me a lot. I recommend joining this e-group (<http://pets.groups.yahoo.com/group/truthaboutvaccines>) to learn more about the area of vaccinations and connect with some long-time non-vaccinators. It will be a real eye-opener for you!

What about nosodes? I've heard they can be used instead of vaccines.

Nosodes are powerful remedies that have a legitimate use in homeopathy. However, they should *not* be used in lieu of vaccines. This practise is unnecessary and potentially dangerous. For more information, please join the TAV list and see the Nosode article.