

I don't vaccinate my dogs at all – the High Risk Option? Catherine O'Driscoll

Our dogs are in the midst of an epidemic. It's not an epidemic of viral disease, but of chronic ill health. They're besieged with itchy, pus-laden, scabby skin; vomit and diarrhoea are the norm. One in every hundred dogs suffers from epilepsy, and an even higher number lives with painful arthritis. Allergies are also reaching epidemic proportions: dogs are becoming allergic to life.

According to Dr Jean W Dodds, an eminent vet and researcher, both allergic and autoimmune diseases have been rising since the introduction of modified live virus vaccines. Autoimmune diseases are where the body attacks self; they include cancer, leukaemia, thyroid disease, Addisons, Grave's disease, autoimmune haemolytic anaemia, rheumatoid arthritis, diabetes, lupus, thrombocytopenia, organ failure, skin inflammations, and more.

We also seem to have a tremendous number of dogs with behavioural problems, largely due to over-vaccination and processed pet food. Vaccines are known to cause inflammation of the brain, as well as lesions throughout the brain and central nervous system. The medical term for this is 'encephalitis', and vaccine's role is acknowledged in the Merck Manual. Merck is a vaccine manufacturer.

Years ago, I was the typical 'responsible' dog owner. My four Golden Retrievers were vaccinated every year, and they were fed a 'complete and balanced' pet food, recommended by my vet. The red carpet was metaphorically rolled out once a fortnight, each time I visited with a dog suffering from chronic disease. Eventually the problems became more serious: my dogs started to die years before their time.

Over the years, I've collected research documents to help me make decisions about my dogs' husbandry, and to share what I've learnt with other dog lovers. I also hoped that vets would take notice of the research, and stop over-vaccinating. All medical interventions come with a risk – even the humble aspirin can be deadly. So you have to do a risk/benefit analysis whenever you consider medications. What, then, are the risks of vaccines?

Research by Frick and Brookes shows us that vaccines can trigger atopy (skin allergies). (*Am J Vet Res. 1983 Mar;44(3):440-5*). Dr Jean W Dodds tells us that retroviral and parvoviral diseases, and **MLV vaccines**, are associated with lymphoma, leukaemia, organ failure, thyroid disease, adrenal disease, pancreatic disease, and bone marrow failure.

Vaccines cause cancer in cats at their injection site and, according to the *Journal of Veterinary Medicine*, August 2003, vaccines cause cancer in dogs at their injection sites. Vaccines cause autoimmune haemolytic anaemia (*JVM, Vol 10, No. 5, September/ October 1996; Merck Veterinary Manual*), and arthritis (*BVJ, May 1995 and Am Coll Vet Intern Med, 2000; 14:381*). Epilepsy is a symptom of encephalitis, which, as we already know, can be caused by vaccines.

According to Dr Larry Glickman and his team at Purdue University, serum and foreign proteins in vaccines can cause autoimmunity (i.e. cancer, leukaemia, organ failure, etc.). This research also indicates that genetic damage is possible, since vaccinated dogs developed autoantibodies to attack their own DNA. Research from the University of Geneva echoes this finding.

Over the years, many vets, particularly in America, have been saying that they think vaccines cause a diverse range of problems in animals. For example, Christine Chambreau DVM said, 'Routine vaccinations are probably the worst thing we do for our animals. They cause all types of illnesses but not directly to where we would relate them definitely to be caused by the vaccine.' She is not alone in this view.

So imagine my dilemma ten years ago, when Edward and Daniel came into my home. Having already seen my vaccinated dogs suffer with chronic illnesses, and dying from cancer and leukaemia - knowing that vaccines may have caused these illnesses - what was I to do?

I concluded that I would rather risk viral disease with my dogs, than have them suffer from the epidemic of chronic and fatal illness that is gripping the canine population. I

appreciate that some will consider me irresponsible. But what actually are we running from when we vaccinate?

OK, so distemper is so rare that most vets haven't seen it in at least ten years. Also, according to the top researchers, and stated by the American Veterinary Medical Association, once immune to viral disease, dogs are immune for years or life. So why are vets and vaccine manufacturers still trying to get us to vaccinate against viral disease every year, or even three-yearly – especially when you consider the risk?

According to the Intervet data sheet, dogs will develop permanent immunity to hepatitis over the age of 12 weeks. So why keep vaccinating against that? Kennel cough is easily treated in most cases, and the vaccine isn't very effective. So what's the point? Leptospirosis is rare (my vet tells me he hasn't seen it in ten years, either), and the vaccine is associated with some of the worst adverse reactions. Isn't this vaccine an unacceptable risk, then? And parvovirus is – according to the Concise Oxford Veterinary Dictionary – rarely a problem for the normal healthy adult dog.

The next question, of course, is how do you get yourself a normal healthy adult dog? Aha – catch 22. In my view, you get a healthy adult dog by not vaccinating at all! Vaccines destabilise the immune system, leading to all sorts of chronic illness. From all I've seen and read, vaccines do not set your dog up for good health. They have the potential to make your dogs itchy, scratchy, vomiting, diarrhoea-filled, sickly, sub-normal shadows of their former selves – ready and waiting for the more serious killers like cancer to arrive. Vaccines represent the perfect recipe for the chronic illness epidemic I've been describing.

Does this mean I've left Edward and Daniel open and unprotected against viral disease? No. When they were puppies they were given the homoeopathic nosode, a safer vaccine alternative. They have also been fed naturally all their lives, providing vital nutrients to boost their immune systems, and they are exercised well (which also boosts the immune system). Have they ever they suffered from recurrent hot spots, allergies, digestive upsets, eye and ear infections, or any other chronic illnesses? No. Did they die of cancer at the age of five, or leukaemia at the age of six, or paralysis at the age of four – as my vaccinated dogs did? No. In fact, they're *probably* very well

equipped, and healthy enough, to withstand the diseases I might otherwise have vaccinated against.

Is probably good enough? Well – it's the best anyone is going to get. Because even vaccines cannot guarantee immunity.

So am I taking the high risk option? I don't think so. It seems to me that good health is a God-given natural right. It's only man who messes it up. The natural order is wiser than any of us, and those of us who don't vaccinate our dogs are proving natural law to be right.

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