



Vaccinations

This is a very touchy and hotly debated topic regarding both people and the animals that share our lives. I believe in informed decision making. This is why I encourage all my clients to read all sides on this issue. What I would like to accomplish in this article is to give you information that can be placed on both sides of the scale, along with my personal experiences and my work with rehabilitating horses and how vaccinations can affect the process.

The best place to start is with a quote from noted vaccine scientist, Dr. Ronald Schultz from UW School of Veterinary Medicine, *“Be wise and immunize, but be wise how you immunize”*. Dr. Schultz’s mantra is universal, and crosses all species. I also believe it brings a better balance to the subject, since we have those who believe that annual vaccines should always be administered, and on the other side we have those who believe that no vaccines should ever be given.

I have been on this planet 50+ years, and the vaccines I received as a child were given generally one at a time, and there were not very many. The average child now receives 46 doses of various vaccines before entering preschool, and many are given in the same visit. I had chicken pox in elementary school, and so did half the children I went to school with in the 1960’s. We all missed a week or 2 of school and all returned to health and the classroom. Others had the mumps and measles with the same results. And we all gained a natural immunity to these diseases for the rest of our lives.

We give our pets, and our horses vaccines/ boosters every year in most cases because the veterinarians recommend that we do. I often ask new clients, “When was the last time you received a vaccine?”, “Why did you get vaccinated as a child, and never again afterward, yet somehow believe that our animals need it every year?” If you think about our life span as compared to theirs, we outlive all our pets by 3 or more times, yet I received possibly a dozen or less vaccines in my 50 years, and the average horse under typical conventional care can receive as many as 7-14 vaccines every year. If the horse lives to be 25, that’s 175 to 350 vaccines over their life.

I spoke with Dr. Jean Dodds from Hemopet, when my dog had a reaction to a rabies vaccine and I had her blood titers drawn for all of her puppy shots. Dr. Dodds told me that immunity is like pregnancy- you either “are” or you “are not”. You cannot impart more immunity to an already immune individual, animal or human. Any measurable titer is evidence of immunity. Beyond the evidence in the blood, there are T-cells and B-cells aka- memory cells that are part of the picture that we cannot measure, but operating to protect us just the same. Memory cells persist for 20 or more years, and are not increased by re-vaccination.

Now, just in case you don’t know what a titer is, let me give a brief explanation. Blood is drawn, and antibody levels are measured for an antigen and are expressed by a ratio, like 1:5. This means that it was diluted once, twice, three times, four times, and five times before there was no trace of antibodies. In my opinion, everyone and every animal should be titered following those baby/puppy shots, to see if and what kind of immune response each one generated. You know the old adage, “The proof is in the pudding?” –The proof is in the titer. Somehow we have been convinced that there is magic in that vile of vaccine that will protect us and our animals, and that more is better, when in fact, more does nothing to increase immunity.

There is a tremendous amount of material written on this, and I will point you to some of it as a spring board at the end of this article, so I won’t repeat the studies that were done by people far more qualified than me. This is what I want you to do, and critically think your way through as I did. What I am going to share is some personal experience.

My interest in all this was sparked by an incident close to 20 years ago. I was exposed to a rabid raccoon in my barn, and there were several that were caught afterwards that were rabid also. I had post exposure treatment, which included a first shot IV, and second IM same day, seven days later IM, and a third IM 21 days later. I asked my doctor if I should get an annual booster, and he told me that I should have a blood titer drawn to see, but chances are that I should have a high titer level for many years.

I was in an automobile accident, and had to board my horse at a local barn. During that time, the majority of his care was dictated by the owner of the barn. He was given several vaccines in the same day. I was horrified to come visit him the next day to see he was given vaccines for diseases he had during his life, and already had immunity to. No one bothered to ask. His injection sites were sore and swollen for days. His sheath swelled, and he had a fever.

I had pot-bellied pigs, and one morning a rabid skunk persistently tried to enter their shelter. One of my pigs kept grabbing it by the scruff of the neck and throwing it out the door. My husband shot the skunk, and the Health Dept., confirmed it was rabid. They (the Health Dept.) insisted that I euthanize the pigs. I said, “well, they had rabies vaccines. Isn’t this why we vaccinate?” There were no bites or broken

skin. They finally agreed to allow us to quarantine them for 6 months, as I was qualified to be their sole care giver because I had post exposure treatment. They made it through the quarantine with no problems and lived many years afterward with no additional vaccines.

One of my horses had a severe laminitis episode one spring. I was just starting my education in Equine Sciences, and my new business with natural hoof care. I knew from my studies that vaccines can trigger a laminitic response. I spoke to my vet about it and we titered him for rabies. I was shocked when his ratio came back at 1:4500- yes, that's four, thousand, five hundred. The horse had possibly 6 rabies vaccines in his life. We also had some rabid skunks that year on our property, and I suspected that maybe the high titer was his immune response to a possible exposure since one of the skunks was found in their pasture dead. There's no way to prove it- just a suspicion. My next incident was my dog. She clearly had a reaction to her rabies vaccine. My vet did not agree with me but I saw what happened to her within 24 hours of receiving it. There were no changes in her diet or anything else. Swelling and redness around the lips, face and ears. Her ears flaked and itched her for 6 months. She also developed dry scaly spots on an elbow and hock (classic reaction). When it was time to booster, I told them, titers only, and I sent the results to Dr. Jean Dodds at Hemopet. My dog had measurable titer for all her puppy shots. Her rabies titer after just 1 shot, was 1:14. Dr. Dodds told me that a ratio of 1:5 is sufficient to protect a human from exposure, and rabies laws are written to protect people. This ratio should be extrapolated, however she reminded me that any measurable titer is evidence of immunity. She said revaccination was unnecessary, and my vet still disagreed.

I was at a riding club pic-nic last summer, and met some people there who asked me to come look at their horse on my way home. She was extremely lame. She obviously had metabolic issues, Cushings for starters. Her coat did not shed the entire summer. Her feet were very long with shoes and pads attached, full of ripples which are repeated immune/dietary insults. What caused the final breakdown? They told me she had received a rabies vaccine, and was laying down by the next day. She was already at the precipice with everything else loading her immune system. The vaccine reaction sent her over the edge.

Let's go back to Dr. Shultz's "mantra". *Be wise and immunize, but be wise how you immunize.* A life threatening disease like rabies is wise to administer. And even with it visiting me personally and my animals, I still do not believe that annual boosters are necessary. We/they are either immune or not. Spend the extra money and titer!! There is no need to assault their system when it is not necessary.

There are a few more things I would like to talk about. Nature and disease, health and what is in the vaccine vile. In nature, we are generally exposed to ONE disease at a time. If we are healthy, and our immune system is up to par, our bodies are engineered to send out the guard to protect us. If the forces are already overwhelmed fighting on many fronts, the disease overtakes the forces, and we get

sick. If you have a really good immune response, your body can fight something off without you ever realizing it. As a matter of fact it does it every day. The problem with multiple vaccines administered at the same location, on the same day, in the same moment, is something nature never prepared us, or our animals for. Instead of generating a healthy immune response, the forces are scattered, are of no good use, and the immune system is suppressed. Some of those spring-time mystery issues, tender feet, laminitis, runny eyes, allergies can be traced to that vet visit, when a bomb was dropped on the immune system of your horse in the form of 7 or more vaccines.

Then there's the vaccine itself. I take my dog to a Chiropractor/ Acupuncture veterinarian occasionally. The vet was once a conventional practicing vet, and she told me that the vaccine issue was one of the main reasons she now only practices chiropractic and acupuncture. She also told me that the vials stay in a truck that has temperature controls, and there are times they don't work. Even the drug companies who make them cannot guarantee viability in every vial. The biggest problem I have is the label on every vial that states that the vaccine is for HEALTHY ANIMALS ONLY. The image of health has been sorely distorted! Next to their wild/feral cousins, our domestic horses are neither sound nor healthy. One of my clients told me her horse had laminitis and was down, and the vet gave her rabies and a 4 way vaccine while she was down! Where is reason? Where is common sense? Was the horse healthy? How can we trust professionals when they do these things? You need to arm yourself with information, because there is no accountability or compensation when things go wrong. You simply become an unfortunate statistic.

What else is in the vial besides a virus? You will find this interesting and alarming. Aluminum hydroxide, aluminum phosphate, ammonium sulfate, formalin, monosodium glutamate (MSG), mercury (thimerosal), bovine protein, egg protein, formaldehyde, mouse protein, phenol red, phenoxyethanol, polysorbate 80, yeast protein. These are chemicals and heavy metals. Many have material safety data sheets. Entire schools are shut down when a student drops a thermometer and the Hazmat has to come and clean it up, yet it is safe (?) to inject into our bodies? Hello! Where do these ingredients go? They generally get stored somewhere in the body, and often that is in the liver. Sometimes when I am faced with rehabilitating very sick hooves on a horse, and the horse's history is full of vaccines and chemicals (drugs), we need to detox the horse, because a healthy foot can only come out of a healthy horse. If the liver is overtaxed with these chemicals, we have a huge battle constantly being fought continuously on that front. We have a weakened immune system.

Alright! So what do we do. Remember Dr. Shultz? BE WISE. Learn, read, study. The drug companies who make the vaccines provide the education our doctors receive. There you will find the information to place on one side of the scale. I will leave you with a few sites to gather information to place on the other side, and you will make a truly informed decision when it comes to yourself and your animals. Learn about

titers and start doing them. Do them for the life threatening diseases. Build up your horse's immune system. To do that you will most likely need to change your care practices, especially if they are conventional. Horses need to be horses, and they need to live a life that respects their nature. This includes their diet, the environment they live in and what we do with them. I am always asked about shows. Check with your organizations and see if they will accept a titer test result, if not work with your vet to customize a plan that will give your horse only one vaccine at a time. Contact a holistic vet who knows Homeopathy. There are remedies that can help with negative reactions to vaccines. In my opinion, it is we who drive these shows and events. We vote with our presence and our dollars. We need to demand that we want things done differently. For some of us, this will open doors to thinking differently about what we are doing and why we do it. I will not take my horse anywhere that requires vaccines to participate. His health and well-being are worth far more to me than a ride, a good time, a blue ribbon or a cash award. He is, after all, my friend, and he depends totally upon me for everything in his life. It is me that can make it or break it.

Books I have read on immunity:

Win the War Within, Floyd H. Chilton, PhD, published by Rodale

The Road to Immunity, Kenneth Bock, MD and Nellie Sabin, published by Pocket

Web Sites:

Dr. Mercola

<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/directory/Vaccines/default.aspx>

Dr. Ronald Shultz

<http://www.news.wisc.edu/8413>

<http://www.rabieschallengefund.org/education>

Dr. Jean Dodds

<http://www.doglogic.com/vaccination.htm>

<http://www.itsfortheanimals.com/HEMOPET.HTM>

Others:

<http://www.dogs4dogs.com/>

<http://www.doglogic.com/vaccineinfo.htm#news>

<http://www.thinktwice.com/>

<http://www.caberfeidh.com/CanineTiters.htm>

Horses:

<http://www.holistichorsekeeping.com/resources/articles/whatvacin.html>

<http://harmanyequine.com/2011/02/vaccinations-rethought/>

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