

Most Dog Owners Comply With Distemper Vaccines

Survey shows most owners vaccinate for canine distemper, but don't know disease's signs.

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A nationwide survey recently revealed that 82 percent of dog owners vaccinate their pet for canine distemper virus, but 54 percent think signs of the disease are hard to detect.

The survey of 1,005 pet owners was conducted online by WLS Marketing Services Survey for Merial Brand pet vaccines.

"Because vaccination compliance is high for distemper, pet owners are not frequently seeing the disease and, therefore, are not familiar with the signs," said Bob Menardi, DVM, veterinary spokesperson for Merial. "However, CDV is frequently found in wildlife; such as raccoons, foxes and skunks. With such a highly contagious, deadly disease, it is imperative that dog owners understand the signs associated with CDV."

Signs can include coughing, fever, vomiting, diarrhea, seizures, anorexia and serious nasal discharge. Neurologic signs, such as twitching, paralysis and convulsions with "chewing-gum fits," are also frequently seen, according to the company.

The top three reasons for vaccinating against distemper, according to the survey, include: it is part of a routine dog health/wellness program (38 percent); it is prevalent, and your dog might be at risk (23 percent); and it is recommended by the veterinarian (24 percent).

Merial said pet owners should consult with their veterinarian about vaccination.