

## Puppy Vaccine Tips

### 8 guidelines for vaccinating your puppy responsibly.

*Shawn Messonnier, DVM*

One responsibility of owning a new puppy is to protect your new friend from infectious diseases. An important step in this process is vaccination. However, many owners are concerned about giving unnecessary vaccines to their puppies. Here are some tips to help you make the right decisions.

1. Only healthy puppies should be vaccinated. A sick puppy should not be vaccinated until he has recovered from his illness.
2. Your puppy doesn't need to be vaccinated against every disease in the world. Discuss with your veterinarian whether vaccinations are appropriate for your puppy, based on his lifestyle and the region in which you live.
3. Smaller breeds, such as Chihuahuas, Toy Poodles, Shih Tzu and Lhasa Apsos, are more likely to have reactions to vaccines. It's imperative to minimize the number of vaccines given to puppies of these breeds. I also recommend using a quarter to a half dose of the vaccine per visit rather than the entire dose.
4. Puppies that show severe vaccine reactions should likely never be vaccinated again, or at least not vaccinated again with the same vaccine. In these cases, the prior immunization should help, but the dog may still be susceptible to the disease.
5. Homeopathic remedies, such as thuja and lymphomyosot which minimize toxicity, may be given to reduce the chance of a vaccine reaction.
6. Certain supplements, such as antioxidants, may improve your puppy's immune response to a vaccine, offering stronger protection against infectious diseases.
7. One or two vaccines can be given per visit, allowing the puppy to be fully immunized by 3 to 4 months of age.
8. When your dog is 2 years old and older, consider a blood test (vaccine antibody titer test) to reduce the administration of unnecessary vaccines. Current research shows that most pets only require a few vaccines throughout their entire lives because of the excellent immunity vaccines produce.

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