

We here at Franklin Road Animal Hospital have the privilege of seeing patients from a 200-mile radius and beyond. Unfortunately, many of these cases are last efforts for the pets. In gaining the histories of these patients we have noted that often the problems began or became worse following annual vaccinations. As a holistic veterinary clinic we are very concerned about over vaccinating senior patients, cancer victims and animals with immune problems.

What are Titers?

A titer is a laboratory test showing an antibody response to a particular antigen. The body has recognized what it considers to be a foreign invader and has developed a specific antibody response to neutralize the invader. At FRAH we draw the blood and send it off to a commercial lab where results are determined.

If an animal already has a protective immunity to a virus that is substantial is there any advantage in further boosting that immunity? Is it possible that a hyper-reactive state might be produced that could trigger autoimmune diseases and inflammatory reactions in various parts of the body?

Are there substances in the vaccines or virus contaminates that could also cause harm?

A good example would be the adjuvants incriminated in feline fibrosarcoma cases, and another would be the rumored canine vaccine contaminated with bovine virus diarrhea several years ago. We have actually seen animals fighting life-threatening diseases succumb after being vaccinated.

We have found in doing titers that most of these animals have responded well to the repeated yearly vaccines and would not benefit from further stimulation through vaccination. Further, we suspect that it may actually be detrimental. If the animal has not responded to a good vaccine protocol does it make sense to vaccinate this animal again? Can we actually cause harm? We believe the prudent course is to find out why he is a non-responder, treat the problem, and then vaccinate.

Do we vaccinate? Yes. However, we like to separate the vaccines and only vaccinate for what is needed. Unless otherwise requested by the client, and a signed release given, we will not give both rabies and distemper/parvo on the same day, but will wait for three weeks before giving an additional vaccine. We wish to provide the needed protection with the minimum danger. We thus use titers as a screening process for immune problems and to justify not vaccinating for owners, boarding kennels, or others. It is part of taking the best care of your friend and for us of medical creed to at least do no harm.

The American Animal Hospital Association, American Feline Practitioners Association, and the American Veterinary Medical Association are now recommending vaccines every three years as opposed to the manufacture's yearly recommendation.

More recent research revealed at the American Holistic Veterinary Medical Association meetings is that once the animal has responded well to a vaccine the response is good for at least five to seven years.