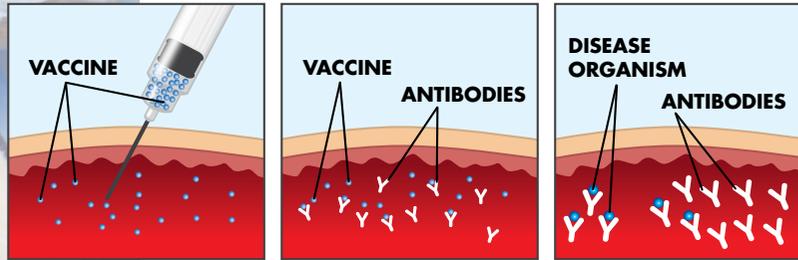


# VACCINATIONS, TITER TESTING AND YOUR PET



*Research has shown that vaccinations may provide effective immunity for many years.*

**AVENTIX**



### What is Immunity?

Immunity refers to an animal's ability to fight off or be unsusceptible to disease. An animal's immunity to diseases is in development from birth. Generally, there are two types of immunity, innate and acquired.

**Innate immunity** is formed in utero, it is non-specific and includes things like the cough reflex, the skin, enzymes in tears, etc.

**Acquired immunity** develops after birth and can be either natural or artificial. Natural acquired immunity comes from either an infection that the body has mounted a defense to (formed antibodies) or from maternal antibodies (breast milk, skin contact, etc.). Artificial immunity is achieved from vaccinations, which stimulate the body's immune system to produce antibodies. Once antibodies are made they come into action to fight infection whenever re-exposure occurs.



### What is a vaccine?

Vaccines contain viruses, bacteria or other disease-causing organisms that are killed or modified so they no longer cause disease or illness. When given, vaccines should stimulate the animal's immune system to produce disease fighting cells and proteins (known as antibodies). For most animals a vaccination is very effective in preventing the disease for several years.

Virulent and life threatening diseases are everywhere as illustrated in the chart below. These are termed as the CORE vaccines – so important, that all animals must receive.

DOG CORE VACCINES		CAT CORE VACCINES	
Disease/Vaccine	Affects	Disease/Vaccine	Affects
Distemper	nervous system, neurological	Panleukopenia (feline distemper caused by a parvo virus)	gastro-intestinal, blood
Hepatitis (Adenovirus)	liver	FHV (herpesvirus)	respiratory system
Parvovirus	gastro-intestinal tract	FCV (calicivirus)	respiratory system
<b>RABIES</b>		<b>RABIES</b>	

### Why do young animals need so many vaccinations?

A puppy or kitten receives an initial series of vaccinations timed to correspond with diminishing maternal antibodies and promote a graduated stimulation of their own immune response. Current vaccination guidelines call for the last vaccination in the puppy series to be given at fourteen to sixteen weeks of age and at sixteen weeks for a kitten.



The "booster" to this initial series is given at the twelve-month mark after the last vaccine in the puppy/kitten series.

### After the first year booster when are vaccinations required?

Research has shown that vaccinations can provide effective immunity to the CORE diseases for many years. Recent Vaccination Guidelines from WSAVA (World Small Animal Veterinary Association) recommend that most animals require revaccination with CORE vaccines no more than every three years. WSAVA supports the use of antibody level testing or titers to determine the need for revaccination. Law mandates annual rabies vaccinations but certain exceptions exist and this should be part of a discussion with your veterinarian.

## How do I know if my pet's immunity is at a protective level?



Research shows that vaccinations often provide effective immunity to the CORE diseases for many years. However, the rate of decline of immunity can

vary greatly from animal to animal which can lead to either giving unnecessary vaccinations or gaps in protection.

We now offer an in-clinic blood test, the **Canine VacciCheck**, that measures antibody levels or titers, for the three canine CORE diseases. VacciCheck is accurate and approved for use in dogs by the USDA and Health Canada-CFIA. If a VacciCheck result measures as “protected”, your veterinarian may advise that a vaccination for one or more of the canine CORE diseases, is **not** necessary.

While a positive or high titer tells us a dog is protected, a LOW titer does not necessarily equate to unprotected. Many factors influence immunity, therefore your veterinarian will make a recommendation as to what is best for your pet.

The VacciCheck titer test is performed in the clinic lab with results usually available within a day or so.

A Feline VacciCheck is in development but not yet available.

## About the Canine VacciCheck Blood Titer Test

**VacciCheck is most beneficial when used in the following scenarios:**

- Adopted animals with unknown history
- To assess immunity levels achieved after initial puppy/kitten series or after the first year booster
- To assess need for routine vaccinations in a mature animal
- To assess need for vaccinations in dogs with chronic illnesses or in a weakened state
- To assess immunity in animals that have reacted adversely to vaccines in the past
- Provide proof of immunity in lieu of vaccination, to boarding facilities, municipal governments, day care, etc.
- For breeds known to be a “genetic non-responder”

**The best health protection for a pet is an annual health check-up by a veterinarian. Other than vaccination needs, the annual health check-up will determine:**

- if preventative health measures should be instituted (diet, oral health, skin & coat, etc.)
- the existence of early signs of disease or breed-specific problems
- the status of on-going health issues.

Your veterinary team wants to help your pet live a long, healthy life; so be sure to visit often, ask questions and learn what health care options exist.

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