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Changes and Updates

As some of you that have been a member of this newsletter for awhile know, I have not been exactly consistent with sending out newsletters on a regular basis. Well that is about to change. Every Friday or maybe Saturday morning, I will be sending out the weekly newsletter to you by email. The newsletter will usually have an article about updates to my websites, general information, my personal life, etc. then an article about dogs and an article about horses. If you have any questions, concerns, or just a topic you would like to be discussed - send me an email and you just might end up in the next issue.

To show my appreciation that you actually signed up to be a member of my exclusive (yeah right) club, you will have a couple perks that just regular visitors to my site might miss. For example you will be the first to see any promotions or great deals I find on the web. You will be the first to participate in any contests I will have, and lastly since I consider you a close personal friend (you signed up didn't you?), you will get to find out a little more about me personally such as what was I thinking having four kids!?! Kevin(9) Alex(6) Tucker(2) Celia(10 months). For all you horse people you know what it means that I have a baby girl - yeah I am going to have to get out of the horse business before she wants one...LOL

If you have not been to the websites lately you need to go. I am making changes to them providing more information from different sources, adding cool things like podcasting. Don't know what a podcast is? It is like a radio show on the internet. I will record a show basically me talking about a specific topic and you can listen to it on the internet or download it to your computer or to your iPod. I will be doing at least one show a week on

Mondays. Also you really need to check out the blog posts and comment on them, it allows you to be interactive and give your opinion on what I am writing about. Check out the one that I did on Vaccinating your Dog - (If you have a dog you MUST read this) <http://healthysadog.com/vaccination.php>

If It Was Your Dog...

If It Was Your Dog...What Would You do? Is the title of my new book. It will be available as an ebook very soon. This question I hear as do most every other vet on a regular basis. Usually we hear this when a decision has to be made that is difficult and the owner just wants reassurance that they are making the correct decision. In vet school we are taught to distance ourselves in these decisions. Give the facts and the two choices and allow the owner to make the decision. Now you may ask why are we taught to be distant in such an important decision. In short I will say for legal reasons and our standard response is "I am not as emotionally attached to your dog as you are so I would not be the appropriate person to answer such a question. I can only tell you the benefits and risks of either decision and you must decide what is best for you and your dog." Me I am a little different, as most of you either know or have guessed, I usually explain that it is not my dog but if it was I might choose this over that for this reason. I have helped quite a few owners that just could not bring themselves to euthanize (put to sleep) their dog even though it was best for the dog. They just were incapable of making that decision the decision itself was more difficult than the actual euthanizing. In cases like these I do basically say straight out that the time has come and if it were my dog I would put it to sleep. The problem is that our opinion is a "professional" opinion and is weighted more in a court of law, so decisions of someone's else's property should be made by that someone else, according to lawyers.

Anyway back to my book...I am going to tell you what I would do and what I still do with my dogs to keep them healthy. I have two, Meme, my Border Collie, who is 18 months old and Ollie, my mutt, who is 14 years old. I will give in depth information on how I care for them, what I feed, what I vaccinate for or more exactly why I do not vaccinate, basically everything that answers if it was my dog what would I do to care for it. Ollie is a 14 year old dog who is just under 50 lbs and looks and acts more like an 8 year old dog. I must be doing something right.

Oh if you want to know why I do not vaccinate before the book comes

out be sure to check out the post on my blog...

<http://healthysadog.com/vaccination.php>

West Nile Vaccination?

OK about a year ago I was still on the fence for the West Nile Vaccine on whether we really should be giving it to our horses or not. I was unsure as to whether it was actually protecting our horses. The vaccine came out very fast from a company known for producing vaccines just because they can produce antibodies against the disease they are fighting against. However just because your horse produces antibodies does not mean they are actually protective antibodies...for example, the rhino virus vaccine does not protect against the neurologic form of the virus, or the EPM vaccine or Giardia vaccine for dogs, antibodies do not heck, can not protect against parasites, they are worthless vaccines. So I was not sure as to if this WNV vaccine was actually protecting horses. OH the company would say that look at the number of West Nile cases from the year before we had a vaccine, they are decreased now. It must be from the vaccination program and the only reason we still have West Nile is because many horses were not vaccinated. Unfortunatly that logic does not fly, there are many other reasons for the decrease in West Nile cases. In my opinion the decrease in the number of cases of West Nile truly is that many of the horses actually came down with West Nile and just did not show symptoms. Their immune system fought it off and it still is fighting it off today.

Well now my opinion has changed a little. Oh I still believe that many of the horses have natural immunity, but now there is a vaccine that actually does work. To be honest there are two that work and neither one is the first vaccine that came out. Both of the vaccines that actually work use DNA technology. Recombitek by Merial and Prevenile by Intervet use this technology in which DNA of the West Nile Virus is spliced and then combined with another different virus, one that does not infect the horse.

For example the Prevenile vaccine combines Human Yellow Fever and Equine West Nile. The DNA of the Yellow Fever virus that forms the virus' structure are replaced by the dna of the West Nile structure. So what is produced is a Yellow Fever Virus with the structural components of the West Nile virus. SO the horse's immune system believes it is being attacked by the West Nile virus; however it can not produce symptoms because the internal components of the virus are Yellow Fever which does not infect

the horse.

The Recombitek vaccine uses parts of the dna of West Nile and it is spliced into the Canary Pox virus. The dna parts of the West Nile that are put into the Canary Pox are specific to make the proteins that the horse immune system believes is West Nile virus. Since it is not actually the entire virus and the Canary Pox virus can not multiply in the horse the horse does not become ill.

OK so that is the technology portion of the vaccines, so why are they better. The reason that they are better is two fold. One the immune system believes it was actually infected with the West Nile virus, with this technology the vaccines simulate what really happens in an active infection without causing infection. This produces very specific and good quality of antibody and possibly a longer lasting antibody (one effect that the drug companies may not want you to know). The second reason is that the immune response is good without having to use adjuvants. An adjuvant speeds up the immune system. In traditional vaccines an adjuvant has to be used to stimulate the immune system and force it to believe it is being infected by the real virus. Unfortunately, adjuvants have been insinuated to produce immune system disorders such as allergies or autoimmune diseases and even cancer in dogs and cats. In horses I believe it has an effect on horses with allergies and idiopathic head shakers.

Oh and lastly a third reason why dna technology vaccines for West Nile prevention are better? They actually work! 90% effective in one study within 26 days of giving the horse ONE vaccine, not one and a booster just one shot produced protective immunity.

SO if you feel like you need to have your horse vaccinated for West Nile be sure you purchase or your veterinarian administers the best vaccine. Also remember vaccination is never 100% effective, especially in the horse. The horse prefers to use the primary immune defense system not the secondary. Vaccines produce immunity for the secondary defense system...but that is a topic for another day.

Thanks for reading,

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Contact
information

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