

DCAH Newsletter

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New Vaccine Protocol

Our hospital takes very seriously its responsibility to provide the best possible health care for your pets. This responsibility includes staying current on new developments in the field of veterinary medicine. An area of recent research and study has focused on determining the optimum frequency of vaccines required to provide adequate protection against diseases. In response to new data in the field, our hospital has decided to change its vaccine protocol. In the next few years, we expect more veterinarians will follow our lead. The changes we have made, and the rationale for them, are summarized below:

Rabies. (Canines). No change. The first vaccine will still be given at 4 months as required by law. It will be boosted in a year, and thereafter, every three years.

Rabies. (Felines). In the past, cats and dogs followed the same protocol and used the same rabies vaccine. However, growing concern that rabies vaccines may be related to fibrosarcomas (malignant tumors) in cats, has changed this. A new vaccine, specially designed for cats, is less likely to cause these tumors. This vaccine is currently only licensed for a year. Until a three year version of this vaccine is available, it will have to be boosted annually. Therefore, after, the first rabies vaccine, which is required by law at four months, the rabies will be boosted annually.

Distemper (Canines and Felines). Distemper vaccines for both dogs and cats are actually a combination of three to four vaccines, but are referred to as distemper vaccines for brevity. In the past, after the initial puppy or kitten series, distemper vaccines were boosted annually. Research now indicates that these vaccines provide protection for up to three years after the first two years of boosters are given. In

fact titers performed on some of our patients over the past year support this research. Research also indicates that annual vaccinations may be associated with some immune system disorders. Therefore, after the initial puppy or kitten series (boosters every three weeks until 16 weeks of age), the vaccine will be boosted annually the first two years and then every three years thereafter.

Bordatella (Canines only)
Previously, this intranasal vaccine against kennel cough, a viral upper respiratory infection, was given annually starting at six to eight weeks. However, as an exception to other research, studies indicate that immunity in this case may not last a year. Under our new protocol it will be given every six months.

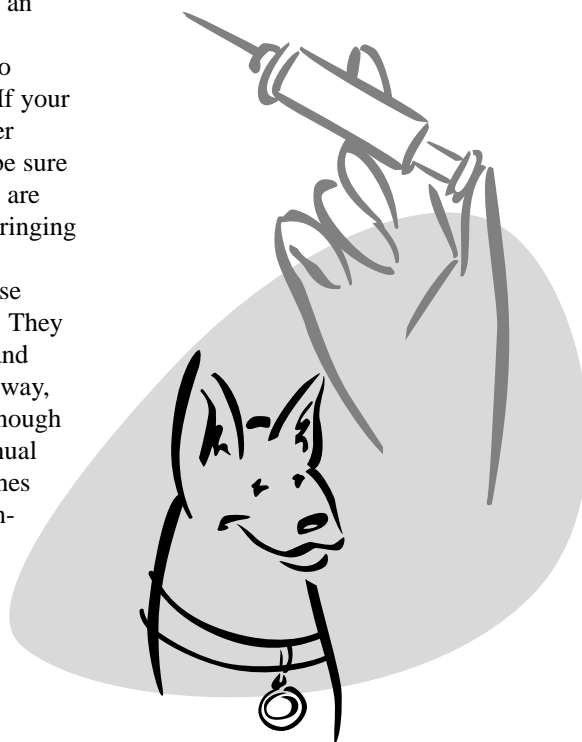
Feline Leukemia (Felines only)
Like the distemper vaccine, this one was boosted annually after the kitten series was given. Under our new protocol, kittens will receive two vaccines at 12 and 16 weeks (after a negative feline leukemia test). Then if your cat is an outdoor cat, the vaccine will be boosted annually for the next two years, and then every three years. If your cat does not go outdoors, no further vaccines will be necessary. (Just be sure that any new cats to the household are tested for feline leukemia before bringing them into contact with your cats.)

Physical Examinations. These will continue to be done annually. They allow the veterinarian to monitor and evaluate your pet's health. In this way, problems can be identified early enough for successful treatments. The annual physical examination also establishes a valid patient-veterinarian relationship, a requirement for dispensing medications to your pet. Fecals (stool sample tests) and heart-worm tests will continue on an annual basis as well.

As an exception, we recommend twice yearly examinations for our geriatric patients (eight years and over). Many problems can develop during these years and early detection of them is key to successful treatment. We also recommend annual blood work for geriatric patients.

The new protocol outlined above will apply to the requirements for boarding, grooming, surgery, and any other admissions to the hospital. During this initial transition period, reminders are based on the old protocol. During your next visit, the doctor will determine the appropriate vaccination schedule for your pet based on its age and vaccination history. The computer will be updated at that time and future reminders will incorporate the new protocol.

Thank you for choosing us to be your partners in the health of your pets. We encourage your input and questions about this new protocol. 🐾



Meet the Staff

In a field where high staff turnover is the norm, our hospital is very proud that a number of our employees have worked here for many years. Therefore, we are starting this feature in our newsletter to introduce you to some of our staff members. Our most senior staff member, Mary Jane Shervais, was already featured in one of our newsletters. She was selected as the runner up

for Veterinary Technician of the Year. She has been with the hospital for over 23 years. Unfortunately, she will be moving to join her husband in the state of Washington by the end of the year. We will miss her greatly and wish her well in her future endeavors.

Another staff member who has been with the hospital for many years is Arlene Schadle.



Meet Arleen

Arleen Schadle has been caring for your pets at Dale City Animal Hospital for 14 years. She has lived in the Dale City area for over 14 years, so she is a neighbor as well. She is our most experienced veterinary assistant. She has had special training in both radiology and dentistry. Classes on behavioral training have made her a valuable asset in our Puppy Socialization Classes, where she has been a familiar, helpful face for many years. As a bird lover and owner, Arleen is very knowledgeable in this specialized field.

Like many animal hospital staff, Arleen has a menagerie of pets at home. She has made a home for several special needs animals. She adopted Max, a dachshund that was paralyzed in the

hindquarters, 9 years ago. Zoe, one of her two Dalmatians, is deaf, and has been trained to respond to hand signals. Bugg, a Chihuahua that her husband brought home from Korea, has been trained to give a smart military salute. She has also adopted several cats that needed homes. And finally, she has two birds, a beautiful Eclectus, and a mustache parakeet. 🐾

Have a Heart Fund

Our thanks to the generous contributors to our Have a Heart Fund. Contributors during this past quarter are listed below:

Robert Murphy
Diane Earnest
Linda Boland
Charles Allgood
Carl and Toby Carlson (In memory of Danny and Tom)
David and Laura Hunsicker
Denise Weiman (In memory of Timber)
Vickie and Stephanie Schofield
Cathy Jo Burdette 🐾

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