

Summer's End Musings

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Hopefully temperatures have moderated into something reasonable by now. Last month most of the country was colored RED on the local weather reports and my dogs and I responded by sprawling around like “rag rugs.” Temperatures around 100 degrees with like humidity are just too much of the “dog days” for me. I thought the topic of sunscreen for dogs was interesting, even though we probably don’t have to think about it again until next summer. Hopefully this summer was not a sign of things to come. I found this article in *Dog News – June 23, 2006*. This magazine is published weekly and handed out at dog shows to advertise big name show dogs.

We all know that hot weather and dogs don’t mix – especially if they are little black dogs. They cannot be left in hot cars and they need plenty of fresh water—we hear that all the time—but do they ever tell you that they can get sunburned? UV rays are as damaging to dogs as they are to people. Dogs should be kept in the shade as much as possible and sun block should be used on them. NOTE: Human sunscreen products may be toxic to dogs. Dogs lick everything! You can find pet sunscreen at pet stores or online at about \$10.00 to \$12.00 for a 2 ounce spray bottle of SP15.

Symptoms of sunburn on dogs include redness, hair loss and skin sensitivity. Red lesions may also appear on the skin. Scottie people should always be cautious with wheaten babies, as their skin seems to be more sensitive. Also, if you are the type of owner who has their dogs shaved down for the summer—please be careful. Hair is nature’s way of protecting the skin. Sunscreen should be applied to areas of the dog where fur is thin—such as nose, lips, groin, and the ears. Gotta protect those pointy ears!

An article in the *AKC Gazette – July 2006* also caught my eye. My favorite veterinary columnist, Dr Jeff Grognat, DVM, published some of the latest canine vaccination guidelines from the American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA).

In 2003, The AAHA published its updated guidelines for vaccination protocols. It then talked about giving boosters every three years instead of annually. Earlier this year, it reviewed its guidelines and issued these revisions. Canine distemper, parvovirus and adenovirus vaccines from major producers can be used on a three year cycle. Puppies should be given their initial vaccines at six to eight weeks of age, followed by boosters at every three to four weeks until they are twelve to fourteen weeks old. A booster is then given a year later, followed by boosters on a three year cycle. Immunity against parvovirus, if it is a modified live virus, can last up to seven years. Canine adenovirus vaccines provide immunity against hepatitis and bronchitis. The injectable, modified live product provides better immunity than the intranasal products (that surprised me).

Rabies vaccines are available in both one and three year products. Puppies are given a one year shot followed by a three year booster a year later. Then, depending on state regulations, the rabies shots are given every three years thereafter.

The distemper, parvo, adeno and rabies vaccines are considered the “core” vaccines and should be given to every dog unless health problems indicate otherwise.

The “noncore” vaccines include bordetella and Lyme disease. These are only required under certain circumstances.

Some vaccines are not recommended. Corona is too rare and not usually fatal to justify vaccinations. Lepto vaccines have a low efficacy (less



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than 75 percent) and do not protect against the strains that cause disease in dogs. Giardia vaccines are not recommended by the AAHA. They may prevent the shedding of the parasite, but do not prevent infection.

I would discuss these new guidelines with your vet before making any changes to your shot protocol. The complete list can be found at *aahanet.org*. If you are going to be kenneling your dogs or they are on the show dog circuit, I would keep my dogs

on a traditional shot schedule. Many kennels are not run by folks who keep abreast of changes in shot protocol and may not let you keep your dogs there without annual shots. On the show circuit, you never know what your dog can pick up from the show grounds.

On the home front: Things are about the same around here. Paris is still on the show circuit. She was "on a roll" for a while, but I think she fell off the wagon somewhere along the way. The rest of the kids are get-

ting ready for a short kennel stay this weekend. I tell them they are going to camp—they are thrilled. Maggie, mentioned last issue, succumbed to cancer just two weeks before her twelfth birthday. My poor, raggedy Bubba is the last survivor of that litter. Hang on, Bubba!!

Hope everyone has a nice end of summer and that autumn is long and beautiful.



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