

Announcer 0:12

If you want a wildly healthy, naturally disease-resistant pet, who turns heads and starts conversations with awestruck onlookers, you're right where you belong. This is the Vital Animal Podcast, with your host, homeopathic veterinarian, Dr. Will Falconer.

Stephanie Bowers 0:36

Hey, everyone. Welcome. Thank you so much for joining us tonight. I'm here with Dr. Will Falconer and Julie Anne Lee. Tonight, we're going to be talking about titer testing for dogs and cats. We've got a bit of an agenda tonight, and there's some questions that we want to go over. Before we get started, can everyone hear me? Just let me know in the chat. That'd be great. And if you wouldn't mind changing your chat option to "All panelists and attendees," so that we can all join the conversation. So tonight, like I said, we have an agenda. Things are going to run a little bit differently. If we have time for Q&A at the end, that'd be great. We'll take a couple audience questions.

Stephanie Bowers 1:14

And the topic tonight is titer testing for dogs and cats. And without further ado, Will, you are a huge, I don't want to say influencer, but you're a pioneer in this industry. You spend your time educating animal owners, helping them raise wildly healthy, naturally disease-resistant animals. I saw on your website, you have courses, you have a Facebook page, and you spend a lot of your time really sharing what you know, and educating the public to be able to make the best choices for their animals.

Will Falconer, DVM 1:50

True, guilty as charged.

Stephanie Bowers 1:54

Guilty! We're so excited to have you on tonight. This is a hot topic that gets asked a lot in our own Facebook group, and our customer service team is constantly fielding this topic. So, we're really excited tonight to have you here. And if we could start the conversation kind of about, what is titer testing? Could you start there and kind of tell us about that?

Will Falconer, DVM 2:16

Sure. Forgive me while my electricity goes out for a little bit, I'm on my laptop, and that's going to keep working. So, the light will come back in a little bit. Titer testing really is just a measurement stuff of how many antibodies are in the blood. And we can get, in any species, they can raise antibodies in a couple of different ways. The most common is, we would test any animal we thought was exposed to a disease, an actual disease. So, people have probably heard of a Lyme titer. A Lyme titer just says there's antibodies for Lyme disease in this animal's blood. Therefore, this animal was exposed to the Lyme organism and made antibodies. Another way to get a titer is to vaccinate. And that's usually the one that people are tracking nowadays and spending a lot of time and worry about, and a fair amount of it unnecessary worry and a fair amount of it overspending, we'll talk about that in a bit, and misreading what a titer means. But that's basically all it is, is measuring the amount of antibody in the blood for a given antigen or a germ, a virus typically, or could be a bacteria, but it's commonly in dogs and cats viruses.

Stephanie Bowers 3:35

That's super helpful. Julie, do you have anything to add?

Julie Anne Lee, DCH 3:38

Not really. I mean, I'm always excited to hear what Will has to say, and I don't know if everybody knows that Will is coming from India. So, he's actually living in India, so if his hydro goes off, I can appreciate that, just spending some time there with Rajan Sankaran, how it just isn't the same as here. So, we're pretty lucky to have him, and, I mean, as far as titers go, I'm so excited to hear from him. Because when I opened up my clinic in 1997, we didn't have any titers in Canada. I had to send all my titers to the US. So, Dr. Dave Roush and I were at Paramount with Dr. Sally Lester, who was the pathologist at Central Lab at the time, which is now IDEX, and we created the very first canine titer for Canada, like, to be able to be done in Canada. So, yeah, it was really hard, and it was like, people thought we were crazy. But, first of all, they were always, "No one's ever going to do them," and they started off doing them Tuesdays and Thursdays only. And then, you know, now we're into full titer panels and all kinds of wonderful stuff. So, yeah, without further ado, I'm just so happy that we can now share even more information and more detailed information, which is really amazing. I'm just going to keep quiet, put myself on mute, and just listen. But it's, yeah, it's gonna be great. Nice to see you Will.

Will Falconer, DVM 5:17

You too, Julie, really nice to see you. I just had, as I was soaking my tea, it's some traditional medicinal tea, I just thought I'd share this, you know, like a fortune cookie, they've got a little thing on the string. It says, William Shakespeare is quoted saying, "One touch of nature makes the whole world kin." And I thought that was sweet, you know, it's really the thread that ties us all together, whether we're teaching stuff, or we're learning stuff, we're all interested in, what's the natural model? Right? What has nature got to share with us, that we can learn from and apply to those animals who we've, in a sense, kind of taken out of nature a little bit. You know, we're telling cats to stay in our houses, or telling dogs to walk on a leash, or whatever we're doing, we're putting the food in front of them, as opposed to them going out and hunting. So, we always want to reframe what we're doing and review what we're doing with nature as a backdrop. And that's been my philosophy since the get-go.

Will Falconer, DVM 6:17

And we'll use it in this discussion on titers as well, because, for instance, the Lyme titer, if somebody gets a Lyme titer, and their animal's healthy and showing no symptoms at all, what does that mean? Oftentimes, conventional vets misread that and say, "Oh, we got to start antibiotics, you're going to get a month's worth of oxytetracycline now, because your dog's fighting Lyme." And I go, "Wait a minute, wait a minute. This is a healthy dog, free of symptoms. And there's antibodies in the blood at a certain number, at a certain level. And you're saying my dog is sick? He's not sick, he's very well, and he's mounting a response and he should be applauded for staying free of symptoms, because he's so healthy." So, that's the natural view of things, and the giving antibiotics for a month is foolishness. We're going to kill all the flora in his gut and set his immune system back 40 years, you know. Anyway, Steph, fire some questions my way.

Stephanie Bowers 7:19

Yeah, sure. I think that's a good segue for, why is titer testing something we should consider for our animals?

Will Falconer, DVM 7:25

Well, it's a measure of how immune your animal is. You know, so, there's two things operant if you're in the world of vaccinations, and you're partaking in that, and many of our listeners are, in one way or another. So, there's vaccination, and there's immunization. And they're two different things. So, the hope is that vaccination, the plunging of the syringe and the needle through the skin and squirting in the virus load, will equate with immunization. Meaning, the animal has now responded to that insult and said, "Oh, I'm gonna make antibodies, and I'm gonna make killer cells that recognize this, and T lymphocyte cells that have a memory about this thing. If I ever see that," the dog's immune system might be saying, "if I ever see that thing again, I'm going to fight it, and my person or my dog is not going to get sick."

Will Falconer, DVM 8:23

But the thing we miss, often, is that vaccination does not necessarily equal immunization. Right? They're two separate acts. One is the act and the other is the response. So, the reason we might want to do a titer is to say, "Did I get my animal immunized after I went through that round of vaccines at whatever age?" So, it turns out, Dr. John Robb has got some proof that we're not immunizing very well, if we're doing the vaccines at around eight weeks of age. Right? And breeders often start before that, if they're kind of off in the woods on, "I want these pups to be immune before they go home." So, they might start at six weeks of age, or they might start, some of them have started at four weeks of age. I recently put a podcast episode out about that, saying, "Please stop this. That's foolishness." What we're doing, really, is only risking the animal's health and not adding any immunization to them.

Will Falconer, DVM 9:21

Why? Because mom's antibodies are in place, probably at least until about 12 weeks, when they start to taper off. And they're probably gone by 16 weeks. So, Dr. Rob says, "You know, if somebody tells me they want to get a titer, I'll say wait till at least 12 weeks. Otherwise, you're wasting your money." Because the vaccination that happened early did not result in immunization. There won't be any antibodies there. Mom's antibodies just blocked that vaccine load from causing immunization, from allowing the animal to react and immunize himself from that shot.

Stephanie Bowers 10:02

That's perfect. Thank you, Dr. Falconer. Can we talk a little bit about what kind of things we can avoid by using titers?

Will Falconer, DVM 10:12

Yeah, if they're used intelligently, titers can avoid excessive vaccination. So, the whole idea of vaccinating repeatedly throughout life—just so everyone's on the same page here—there is no scientific basis for that whatsoever. What we have is a label on a vaccine. And guess who put the label on the vaccine? The manufacturers. And if it says, "Repeat at one year,"

what does that really mean? Does that mean the immunization runs out like an empty gas tank at one year? No, no, not at all. What it means is, they study this vaccine for one year in their test animals. They're vaccinated at day one, they fed them and they housed them, and they took care of them in their cages for a year's time. And then they pull them out, and they challenge them with the live virus of that same kind that they vaccinated with, the pathogenic virus, the kind that could cause illness. And they counted up the survivors and they said, "Oh, we've got a 70 or 80% survival rate, or they didn't get sick. And therefore, we know this vaccine works for one year." They stamp a label on that vaccine, and sell it as a one-year vaccine, whatever it is. They might do the same with three years for rabies, and there's typically a one-year and a three-year rabies vaccine. Turns out, they're identical. But in the three-year case, they just studied that lot of vaccine for three years. And at the end of three years, they challenged those animals with live rabies virus, counted up the ones who didn't get rabies and said, "We're going to market with a three-year labeled vaccine."

Will Falconer, DVM 11:58

So, the trouble with that is, that's as far as the science went, and what does the manufacturer want to do? He wants to sell more vaccine, right? What does the vet want to do? Here's the highest markup item in a practice. And that's why it brings in 20% or more of income. How long does it take to load up a syringe, pick up the skin, and squirt it in to the dog? I mean, 15, 20 seconds, 30 seconds? And what does that dose of vaccine cost? Two dollars, two-fifty, something like that. And what is charged? Forty, fifty dollars, thirty dollars, whatever it is. So, you can see why people would say, "Well, I think we should vaccinate every year. We'll keep them safe that way." And the vaccine is labeled for one year. So, they've kind of got the manufacturer on their side, you might say. So, we can use titers to say, has my animal been immunized?

Will Falconer, DVM 12:57

And we can think also of what the immunologists talk about, which is this thing called DOI. DOI just stands for duration of immunity. And here's something everybody needs to know. Because you'll uselessly spend money on titers if you do them too often. And they won't comfort you or they won't help you in your need to minimize vaccines. And I think your question, really, is this: why would we want a titer, or what value might a titer have? A titer can tell us we don't need to revaccinate, bottom line. Because there's immunity there. We vaccinated once or twice, we've measured the titer, and we said, "Ah, there's a bunch of antibodies there." So, knowing that, we can say, "You know, I see you're saying I'm 'due,'" I always put that word in quotes, "you're 'due' for more vaccines? I'm not going to get them. I'm going to say no." You can tell your vet that. "I've got a titer that says my dog's been immunized."

Stephanie Bowers 13:59

And from there, that's how we avoid the over-vaccination. It's strange to me that they're only testing the vaccines, like you said, for a year. Why aren't they going on the longer and, I don't know, actually testing this stuff? The money, follow the money.

Will Falconer, DVM 14:19

There's no money in it. Yeah, they want to sell vaccines. And so, they want to rush it to

market as quickly as they can. And if they get a one-year vaccine out on the market, and people repeat it every year because they think there's science behind that, everybody makes money. Except, the animals are suffering. And the deeper question is, why do we want to limit vaccines in our animals? And the key answer there is, we're seeing and have seen for decades now, Julie's seen it, I've seen it, everybody in homeopathic practice who cares to look sees damage coming from vaccines. In fact, we can't typically get a patient well if we're good homeopaths without saying, "I think vaccines had something to do with this illness. At some point in the prescribing panorama, we've got to get a vaccinosis remedy given that fits this animal's situation," or they don't make it all the way to cure.

Julie Anne Lee, DCH 15:15

Or an obstacle to cure. Like, you're treating something, and somebody, one person in the family is on board of just doing titers or not vaccinating anymore. Somebody wants to get vaccinated, and then every time you vaccinate them, you're back to square one again. So, I would say, it's often a massive obstacle to cure.

Will Falconer, DVM 15:37

Yeah, that's a good way to put it. That's the homeo-speak around getting somebody well, there's obstacles to cure. If you're feeding junk food, or the animal's chained to a tree in the backyard instead of living free and having a nurturing lifestyle. Those are all obstacles to cure Hahnemann identified. And vaccines are a huge one. So, whether you're seeking homeopathic treatment, or you're just trying to raise a healthy dog or cat who's resistant to disease, you've got to know that vaccine injury is a very real thing. You'll see it if you look for it.

Stephanie Bowers 16:14

Definitely. Thank you for explaining that. Can we talk about the limits of titer testing? When we were coming up with the agenda, Dr. Falconer, I think this was your point that you wanted to hit on.

Will Falconer, DVM 16:27

Yeah, it's a real important one. So, while I see titers as valuable, I also see them as only part of the story. So, let's take the vaccination example again. We vaccinate somebody with a syringe full of viruses, and we want to know, was that animal immunized? Well, it turns out there's two arms to the immunization response. One is called the cellular arm, or cell-mediated immunity, is the common term that immunologists talk about. And the other is the antibody arm, or the antibodies, the globulins, that sort of thing, that are produced. And what we're measuring is just that one arm of the antibodies. It's impractical and very expensive, and only done in high tech labs to measure the cellular response.

Will Falconer, DVM 17:21

But here's the good news. We know that it takes cells to make antibodies. You can't get antibodies just out of the blue by shooting a vaccine in. So, it takes a cell to make that antibody and that antibody appears in the blood. So, we can measure that, we can do that affordably, in fact. The prices have come down. If you're not aware of Dr. John Robb and protectthepets.com, you want to get with him if you need a titer affordably. And maybe Julie's got good sources in Canada, as well, that are affordable now. But vets oftentimes try

to charge \$300 or more for a titer. So, that's an aside, they're affordable if you look in the right places. But the limit is, if you're titering and you believe when the titer falls that my animal is not immune anymore to that disease, then you are likely to say, "Oh, I need another vaccine. Because there's not antibodies there anymore." Here's the problem with that. It's not in nature's best interest. Let's go back to nature. It's not in nature's best interest to keep producing antibodies all the time. It's a waste of energy if that disease is not out there. So, at a certain point, all titers will fall, some years later, typically. They typically last for a long time.

Will Falconer, DVM 18:46

You'll see some b.s. claims by vets who would rather vaccinate your animal saying, "Oh, titers go up and down, and they drop off and they come back, and we can't trust titers." No, they'd last a long time. But they will fall at a certain point. So, say you've vaccinated your animal at 16 weeks and maybe again for good measure a month or two later, or maybe at the year birthday. And you've got a strong titer for the first five years. And it's just a drop at year six and it's pretty much down to zero at year eight. Should that senior, or coming on senior, now they're calling those dogs seniors, should that dog be vaccinated because the antibodies are gone? No. What we refer to is the immunologist understanding of this thing called DOI, duration of immunity. So, immunity is still there, and the immunologists I quote often are Dr. Schultz and Tom whatever his name was, I forget now, years and years ago when I graduated from homeopathy training in '92, said that immunity to viruses persists for years, if not for the life of the animal. Years, if not life, to viruses. So, that's important understanding. And when you have that in the background, and you understand that antibody production is a waste of energy at a certain point, it'll happen if there's exposure to disease, but otherwise you don't need it, and you frame that, knowing that there's cells that have a memory, cellular memory is this long-lasting immunity basis. Then you go, "Oh, okay, his antibodies fell. But that doesn't mean his immunity is gone." It's not like a gas tank that runs out when the antibodies go away.

Will Falconer, DVM 20:38

And we've actually got good data. I've got a rabies paper quoted in one of my blog posts about animals who were out of date on rabies. And they were exposed to a rabid bite. And the standard protocol is to give them another rabies vaccine. And some of these animals, interestingly, had low to no titers. But when they were bitten by this animal, and then given a rabies vaccine to make sure they're safe, their titers bounced way up, and actually got higher than the animals who were up-to-date and kept up with their shots. So, that data spoke volumes to me and to my readers about, ah, so we can make antibodies anew if we need to, if there's an exposure. So, that's the limit of antibody titers. They don't tell the whole story, they just tell us one arm of the cellular immune body response. The cellular immunity is ignored.

Will Falconer, DVM 21:41

The other limit, I think, knowing what I've just said, chew on that for a while and review this video later, is that you don't need a titer test every year. Right? A lot of people do that in lieu of vaccination. Well, we titer test every year. And maybe vets are pushing that, I don't know. But I think it's driven largely by consumers. So, if you've got a titer, whether it's large

or small or in-between, after you've let a month go by from a vaccine event, you're pretty well done. You don't need to keep repeating that work and spending that money year after year, because of what I've just told you. You're just measuring the antibodies, and they're gonna drop off at a certain point. But if you've got a positive titer in any one of those tests that you've run, typically the first one will tell you, then you know that cellular immunity happened. And that's going to live for a long time.

Julie Anne Lee, DCH 22:40

I'm glad you said about a dog around eight years of age and stuff, because I think the other thing that we have to look at is risk versus benefits, too, right? So, you have an eight-year-old dog you've been just doing titers along the way, or you've even been vaccinating, the majority of the diseases that they're vaccinating for, or a large majority, are almost like childhood illnesses, right? Like the dogs and cats should be past their peak of that risk, right?

Will Falconer, DVM 23:15

Yes.

Julie Anne Lee, DCH 23:15

Compared to, what are the risks and what are the benefits? I would always say to people, when you're looking at an animal, an aged animal or a senior animal, or an animal going into their senior years, the complications of a vaccine compared to the risk of them even getting the disease, I don't even think you can compare them.

Will Falconer, DVM 23:40

Yeah, it's a very risky thing. And I hear regularly from people emailing me and commenting on my blog posts and things like that, that my eight-year-old or nine-year-old or 10-year-old dog was rocking along just fine. Healthy, eating well, shiny coat, good eyes. The notice came for a rabies vaccine. He's "due," again in quotes, "due" for a rabies vaccine. And his whole world fell apart after that rabies vaccine. He may have gotten laryngeal paralysis, he may have gotten rear end paralysis and now be dragging his hind legs, those are common after rabies. He may have changed his behavior, and not uncommonly, the sad story is, they'll circle the drain. These dogs will go right downhill and their life will end, within months of getting that unnecessary rabies vaccine. So, yes, the seniors are at far greater risk than they are need for another vaccine. And knowing this about duration of immunity should help you understand that.

Stephanie Bowers 24:47

Yeah, I think that's important, especially... I think I experienced that with our last dog. Just suddenly, like you said, right down the drain. What the heck is going on? And we could never figure it out. And it happened quickly, and quite honestly, it likely was because we were over-vaccinating.

Will Falconer, DVM 25:07

Yeah, it's all too common, I'm afraid.

Julie Anne Lee, DCH 25:09

I think it happens with people. I mean, my grandma was a prime example. She never got vaccinated for anything. And she lived on a farm and then my aunts fought with my mom about putting her in a home, because she was alone and, like seniors' home, not a nursing home. And she didn't want to go. But anyways, my mom got voted out. And when she went, they wanted her to have a flu vaccine. And she was 90, 91. And never vaccinated her whole life. Robust, not sick. And my mom was like, "No way. No way. No way." Anyways, they wound up doing it. And within 48—she never had diabetes, she was perfect—within 48 hours, she went into a diabetic crisis.

Will Falconer, DVM 26:00

Wow.

Julie Anne Lee, DCH 26:02

From this. There was nothing else that was different, like nothing. Not a sick day, healthy as a horse. And my mom was like, "There you go," you know. And they're like, "Well, it had nothing to do with the vaccination." Like, you know? And then she would have things like, just went in a little bit of a spiral, right? Getting insulin, getting her regulated. It's like "What?" So, oftentimes, the side effects that you see aren't side effects that are typically on the side effects of the drug, right? Like, if you look up, "Oh, what's the side effect of a vaccination?" Right? Well, most of the time, it's acute side effects, or all the time, you know, within the first 24 to 48 hours, three days, off their food, seizures, blah, blah, blah, but they only assume that that's going to happen within that very short, acute period of time. Whereas, in my experience, they can maybe be a little off in that first period of time, but then it starts happening a couple weeks later, a month later, you start really seeing degenerative diseases happening.

Will Falconer, DVM 27:16

Yeah, it's a really good point. I think the homeopaths, just for everyone listening, I think it's really important that you keep that in mind. If you haven't seen a vaccine reaction in the first 48 hours, that doesn't mean you're out of the hot water. So, keep watching. And if you've got an animal who's gotten chronically ill, the commonest being allergies of one form or another, they're itching, they can't stop itching or their ears are inflamed, look back. And in the records, in the vet records, which are yours to examine, you'll often see that started about a month after a vaccine was given. Whether it was at youth or after puppy vaccines or whatever. So, another colleague of ours, Christopher Day, in the UK, longtime practicing homeopath, a vet there, interviews these people who come to him with an itchy dog, and say, "When did this itch start? Do you remember a beginning to it?" And 80% of them over the years, with this informal survey, have said, "Oh, I remember it clearly. It was about a month or two after the puppy shots." So, unless we're tuned to watch for that, we'll miss it, and conventional vets can easily blow that off and say, "Oh, no, if it didn't happen in 48 hours, the vaccine doesn't get the blame." But we know better. We've seen it for years and years.

Stephanie Bowers 28:42

So, it's all connected. Yeah. What do you guys say? Can we move into Q&A? We've got quite

a few here.

Will Falconer, DVM 28:49

I'm fine.

Stephanie Bowers 28:50

Yeah? Would that be okay?

Will Falconer, DVM 28:52

Sure.

Stephanie Bowers 28:53

This one we see a lot. So, I'm curious, Dr. Falconer, how you feel about this. April's asking, how can we handle a rabies titer if it's not recognized in our state, but the vaccine is? And we can even go a little bit more general. How do we, if the vaccine's recognized but the titer's not, what do we do?

Will Falconer, DVM 29:17

Yeah, it's a thorny question. I've got an entire course called Rabies Knowledge is Power that addresses that. So, it's not a simple answer. But I want to assure you that people have found ways. So, part of your education can be just going to vitalanimal.com and searching for "duration of immunity." There's a search box on all the articles, off to the right hand side, just search on "duration of immunity," and you'll bring up an article called "Duration of Immunity and Rabies," something like that, those words are in the title. And if you read the comments on that post, you'll see many, many people who have successfully sidestepped that excessive rabies vaccination question. And they'll give you some ideas about how they did it. So, that's a snippet of the course where I go deeper into how to understand rabies, how to understand rabies prevention, and strategies for either minimizing it, minimizing damage if you've got to give it, or better yet, avoiding it altogether.

Julie Anne Lee, DCH 30:22

People really have to have that foothold in the education to be able to stand in front of whomever to really speak from an educated place of why they don't want it or why they want to just do a titer or whatever it is. But I think the more education that a pet parent has, the stronger the possibility is that you're going to be able to sort of speak the language more, be able to communicate more, and inevitably get what you want, and what's best for your animal.

Will Falconer, DVM 31:06

Yeah, and I'll just add to that in saying, it's really confidence that you want to inculcate. So, the more you learn about it, the more confident you are. So, just learning about this thing called duration of immunity is a huge, powerful point to have in your consciousness, that virus immunity lasts a long time. It doesn't go away in a year. It doesn't go away in three. So, I'll give you an example of a client of mine in Austin, where I practiced for years. She's now, I think, on her fourth or maybe fifth generation of really healthy, vital dogs. She wants to know her heartworm status. And she goes into a conventional vet to get that work done. Every year, I believe. Maybe she's slowed down now. It's been a couple of decades since she

was doing this and told me about it. She goes in, she says, "Hi, I'm here for my heartworm test, please." And they pull the blood on these dogs and test them for heartworm: "Oh, they're negative." Still doing Dr. Falconer's protocol, they're negative. And they've learned not to ask her about rabies vaccine, because it says on the record they're out of date for rabies vaccines, because she smiles, every time they ask in the past, she smiles and says, "No, that's all we're here for." And it's a very confident smile. She knows what she knows, that they're immune, and she doesn't get into an argument with anybody, but she's strong. She stands strong and says, "No, thank you. That's all we're here for is the heartworm test. How much do I owe you?"

Julie Anne Lee, DCH 32:38

Yeah, I think that's really important. I do. Rather than getting into any kind of conflict at all, you know, and just saying, you know, "I'm here because I appreciate the, you know, what, working as a team." I always say that to people, that you when you walk in the door, you're part of the healthcare team, you're not walking in less than or more than, you're walking in as an equal.

Will Falconer, DVM 33:05

I love it.

Julie Anne Lee, DCH 33:05

And that means that you respect your practitioner for what they're bringing to the table. But then the same should hold true for you, and what you've educated yourself to learn. And it's a, like you said, the confidence level and the understanding is, I think, really prime.

Will Falconer, DVM 33:24

Yep. When you own that, and you say, "I'm the one who's in charge of my animal's health. And I appreciate your help, Dr. White Coat," or whoever your vet is, "I appreciate your help when I need it. But I'm calling the shots on my animal these days, because I've really studied these issues. And I know vaccine immunity lasts a long time. So, yes, I know there's a law." You know, you don't have to get into the nuts and bolts of immunity. But you can just say, "I've studied this and I'm very confident that my dog is still immune, or my cat is still immune."

Julie Anne Lee, DCH 33:55

You said you had a heartworm protocol. Do you have that on your site as well?

Will Falconer, DVM 34:02

Yeah. That's a searchable term too, just heartworm. Yeah.

Julie Anne Lee, DCH 34:05

Okay. Great.

Stephanie Bowers 34:07

And I'll post your website again, so that everyone can jot it down or click the link and go.

Will Falconer, DVM 34:14

Thanks, Steph.

Stephanie Bowers 34:15

Yeah, you're welcome. I've got another question here. Someone says, "Ask Dr. Will this: what do vets do for rabies? They have to have immunity. But I know they don't get vaccinated every year, or every three. So, what do the vets do?"

Will Falconer, DVM 34:30

Yeah, it's a great question. I'll tell you a funny story. A colleague of ours in upstate New York, Cynthia Lankenau, we all got vaccinated for rabies in vet school. It was protocol. And I think we got it probably twice. And Cynthia was curious about her titer. So, she measured it periodically. And a decade later, it was still high and it was actually climbing. She hadn't gotten any more rabies vaccine since the days of vet school. A decade later, when she measured two titers, the second one was higher than the first. So, it was still climbing for quite some time. So, we know, as do MDs who don't vaccinate their children, MDs, if you ask MDs point blank, "Do you follow the schedule the CDC mandates for children vaccines?" They will say, "No, I do not." So, we know, they know that immunity is a long-lasting thing and we're not vaccinated for rabies. I would not even consider it living in India now, were I to join the volunteers who go into the field and vaccinate whole villages full of wild dogs and feral dogs and owned dogs as a means of controlling rabies. I would, in a situation like that, take Lyssin periodically, the nosode made from rabbit saliva, to protect myself. I wouldn't vaccinate myself again. I know too much. And I have seen too much damage. I myself have had vaccine damage, and I don't want to repeat that. So, it's a great question.

Stephanie Bowers 36:05

Killer answer, too, thank you. There's a question here. So, if mom never fed her puppies, will they not have mom's immunity?

Will Falconer, DVM 36:15

Correct. That's why everybody who's raising animals pays so much attention to getting colostrum in. And here's something many don't understand, which is that colostrum is only absorbed in about the first 12 to 16 hours of life. So, when those babies hit the ground, whether they're a foal, or a calf, or a piglet, or a dog, or a cat, a kitten or a pup, a smart breeder of those animals will know, we've got to make sure this youngster latches on and gets a good nursing full of colostrum. So, yes, you'll see sickness if they do not. And it's a hard road to just replace that with some milk replacer or even a colostrum supplement later on. Because that first milk and that absorptive capacity of the child's gut or of the youngster's gut is only high for that first 12 to 16 hours of life.

Stephanie Bowers 37:14

That's great. Thank you. Julie, did you want to add there?

Julie Anne Lee, DCH 37:17

And I think, you know, just because gut health and stuff is such a big thing with me. A lot of animals that aren't, well, dogs anyways, that aren't fed often that way are animals that have gone through C-sections. And so, they're getting a double whammy, because they're not getting the vaginal bacteria as they're coming out, because that bacteria is massive with antibodies. And I think it's really important for anybody that knows if their animal hasn't had colostrum or has been birthed through a C-section to be paying attention to that.

Will Falconer, DVM 38:01

Never thought of that. So, they're not somehow getting colostrum out of the mom and giving it to those pups?

Julie Anne Lee, DCH 38:07

Lots of times they don't. I know a lot of breeders that have, when they have C sections, they just automatically go to formula.

Will Falconer, DVM 38:16

Wow.

Julie Anne Lee, DCH 38:18

Mm-hmm. So, they're getting it twice right? They're not getting the antibodies from vaginal birth, and then they're not getting antibodies from the milk. So, they're really needed. Yeah, I know a lot of bulldogs and Frenchies and things like that are pretty common, are often milk replacement-fed. So, that's a biggie.

Will Falconer, DVM 38:42

Yeah.

Stephanie Bowers 38:43

Many of them have allergies, too. They have health issues.

Julie Anne Lee, DCH 38:47

Yeah, they do.

Stephanie Bowers 38:48

Yeah. This question, excuse me if we've already answered it, but it's coming up quite a bit. Maybe it's worth repeating. When do we start titering? Someone's got a seven-month-old pup. And Gail's asking, do we titer more than once? Jackie's saying that she titers yearly, maybe I'm overdoing it. So, could you kind of go over that again, if you wouldn't mind, please?

Will Falconer, DVM 39:13

Sure. So, a valid time to get a titer is about a month after you've finished vaccinating. Whether that's a vaccine... The vaccine's got to be given probably after that 12-week mark to take, to give immunity. And so, if you measure the titer at 16 weeks after a 12-week vaccination, you'll see something on the test. And an aside is, some vaccines will have a number associated with them. That's the protective number. Dr. Schultz has said, and Dr. Robb has brought it out in my podcast episode with him, that it's like a pregnancy test. If there's any number that's greater than zero, that's a positive titer. They're either immune or they're not. So, you're either pregnant or you're not on the test, you're either immune or you're not. If you've got a number over zero, it counts, okay? So, don't buy the "It's too low, we've got to revaccinate."

Will Falconer, DVM 40:15

But I'll reiterate that what he said also was, animals who were vaccinated before 12 weeks and titered at 12 weeks oftentimes didn't have antibodies, because mom's antibodies were

in the way, they blocked the vaccine from immunizing the pup. So, whenever you are done with your vaccine regimen, if you're going to do vaccines, give it about a month and then titer. But you can do it later than that, it's not going to disappear. Right? If there's a titer at a month, there's going to be a titer at a year of age, and there's going to probably be a titer, if that was a good titer, it's probably going to still be there at three years of age. So, yes, to the yearly unnecessary. Again, this thing called duration of immunity is key. And you want to search that term out, duration of immunity is a well-known entity. So, if you've got a positive titer, you're really done. You can stop spending money on titers, because you know this thing called duration of immunity is there.

Julie Anne Lee, DCH 41:17

I've even read some studies where when they're vaccinated when the maternal antibodies are still present, that they can actually collide. And the puppy winds up, or kitten winds up not having any immunity. So, the mother blocks it. But I've also heard that sometimes it can degrade the mother's immunity. Have you ever heard that?

Will Falconer, DVM 41:42

I haven't. It's an interesting thought. I'd like to hear Shultz talk about that. The number one reason those guys all point out, the immunologists all point out that there's vaccine failure, is because they've vaccinated too early. And the mom's antibodies just blocked it. So, that's the number one reason vaccination does not equal immunization. So, don't start too early.

Julie Anne Lee, DCH 42:07

And I know that we were doing lots of titers initially at our clinic. And we had a few dogs that were anywhere between five and seven that had been getting vaccinated every single solitary year and we did titers on them. And they didn't have a titer. They had, like, zero. And I remember Dave, Dr. Roush saying, "I think that..." And then people would go and revaccinate them. And then a year later, they would get a titer and it would be zero again. And Dave often said to me, "I wonder how often that's happening. I wonder how often dogs are just going in routinely, and being vaccinated, and they're not mounting a response." They're just like, if it's not happening, it's not going to happen. Like, for whatever reason, because we don't do that, right? We don't go, "Okay, we're gonna vaccinate, and then let's see next year, whether he needs it or not, and then go from there." I wonder how many would actually have a zero titer. But they're still not getting sick, they're still not getting the virus from innate immunity, or, I don't know. I think it's just all so fascinating.

Will Falconer, DVM 43:16

Yeah, yeah, there's a thing called non-responders. And that may be what we're talking about here. But I think it's a fairly small minority compared to the majority who do respond.

Julie Anne Lee, DCH 43:30

Yeah, I think what he was saying, too, is like, how do we, rather than—he just doesn't think from a science point of view, to just routinely do it without seeing if they're even responding, and how they would learn so much if we did. If that was the protocol, vaccinate, and then the next year, do a titer to see whether they responded at all. And if they did, then they don't need it anymore.

Will Falconer, DVM 43:58

Right.

Julie Anne Lee, DCH 43:58

Right?

Will Falconer, DVM 43:59

Right.

Julie Anne Lee, DCH 43:59

So, yeah, it's just so...

Will Falconer, DVM 44:01

And I think there's hope on the horizon for people who are facing rabies laws. Depends on where you live, but most of the United States and I think the majority of provinces in Canada have some sort of a rabies ruling. The really golden news on the horizon is that just within, I think, 2019, late 2019, Delaware, the state of Delaware okayed a license if you had a positive rabies titer, period. You could waive the next vaccine if you had a positive titer. So, if you're at all an activist and you want to get your state or your province on that same page, Delaware will share their information with you. You can find it by searching and you can take it to your legislators and say, "There is no reason on God's green Earth that we need to vaccinate for rabies as often as we're doing it. Here's a state who recognizes these things called titers, which we have decades' worth of science about, which make perfect sense." And Dr. Robb has some stuff on that in his episode, I think it was Episode Three on the Vital Animal Podcast, you can listen to that, and I've got some links in the show notes there to help those people who want to change their laws. That's really great work if you're up to it.

Stephanie Bowers 45:23

Yeah, that's super helpful. And it's nice to know that there's light at the end of the tunnel. Like, people are working towards making changes and making a difference and making the best choices for our animals. Really, it's nice to hear. I've got a question from Terry, and quite a few of these questions are duplicates. And there's three, and there's four of the same question. She works in the rescue industry. And she's asking if you have any advice on what to do about the aftermath, after these animals are over-vaccinated, some of them are fighting for their lives. How do we help them once something like this has already taken place?

Will Falconer, DVM 46:01

Yeah, it's a very sad industry. And I'd love to see more, but I think there's just a small handful of people in the rescue industry who are aware of these principles and are working homeopathically to, or using titers minimally, to check their animals that end up on their doorstep. So, the norm now is that animals who end up in a rescue of one sort or another, or a shelter of one sort or another, are blindly vaccinated when they arrive. It's like overkill. And it would probably take not only mind changing and understanding on a lot of these places, in their minds, the management's minds, but also maybe someone to come forth and say, "I'm going to pop for a year's worth of titer testing for your shelter because it

breaks my heart that these animals are damaged by vaccines over and over again." And if they tested them with a simple in-house test, right there in the shelter when they arrived and said, "Oh, there's antibodies for distemper and parvo," or if it's a cat, "There's panleukopenia antibodies. There's a positive titer, this animal doesn't need a vaccine." That in itself would solve so many issues in these poor animals, who are already stressed. You know, they've been abandoned, they've been living on the street perhaps, they're undernourished. To pop them with a slew of vaccines when they arrive on the doorstep is just anathema. It's malpractice, is what it is. So, I don't have a one-size-fits-all for vaccine damage. I treat those animals individually. There's probably 20 remedies for vaccinosis, and I don't automatically reach for one and say this will cure everybody. Julie's got a product and maybe she'll speak to that, that might be a help in those shelter cases.

Julie Anne Lee, DCH 47:54

I mean, that's the product that I have, or we have. It came from a shelter, because of shelters. Because I did a lot of pro bono up in Vancouver with shelters, tons. And it was virtually impossible to do every animal, individual. The Vancouver Orphan Kitten Rescue, they rescued over 1,800 kittens a year. So, you know, and I was in the Downtown Eastside and did all kinds of dogs down there. It's impossible for—and I had three interns and stuff working with me, and we just couldn't keep up. And it was impossible to convince a lot of shelters not to do it. It was just brutal. But I'm going to, you just sparked something in my head. So, basically, it's a combination of thujia and silica. Which I've found to be very helpful for fairly acute symptomatology from vaccinations.

Julie Anne Lee, DCH 48:59

But what I did do with a lot of shelters, is I tried to train the staff to recognize aconite or ignatia. And when they first come in, try and at least reduce their cortisol or their stress levels before they got vaccinated. I found that that was helpful, so that they weren't as scared or sad or stressed or whatever, prior to being vaccinated. I mean, right now for shelters, we just give that remedy to shelters. So, if anybody's working at a shelter and they want some of the Anti-Vaccinosis, for charities, we will just give it to them to use. Because I believe so strong in it. I believe that's half the reason that they go back and that's half the reason that some of these shelter animal... Like, how do they get so healthy? I see these healthy, healthy, healthy dogs being rescued from, like, meat farms. Right? And the photographs of them before they come over here, they've got all their fur and they're skinny, but they look vital and whatever. They come over here and a month later, they have no hair and they've got elephant skin and they're itching their ears till they're bleeding. Well, it's because they've been vaccinated like, I don't even know, three, four, five different times before they get over here. And probably most of those animals have, I've found that with ferals, right, ferals or a lot of strays, they've already got tons of antibodies. They've been living out in the streets, they've been fighting these diseases on their own. And then on top of that, they're stressed, they're captured. And they're vaccinated, and they're sent by a plane or they're sent—it's just overwhelming for me to see all that. But I wonder if some of the snap tests of some of the companies wouldn't donate, or... I don't know. I don't know.

Will Falconer, DVM 51:08

I think that would be a really handy thing to have right there at the incoming processing. Just run a snap test, run a card test, whatever they call it. I don't see the companies shelling out to do it. There's no financial interest. But we've got a lot of wealth in the West. And there's bound to be people who, if they understood this, have enough wealth to just say, "I love the shelter and love what they're doing. I'm going to donate titer testing for every animal that comes in for the next year." How much would that be out of their annual budget? Not much.

Julie Anne Lee, DCH 51:40

No, no.

Stephanie Bowers 51:42

It's doable.

Julie Anne Lee, DCH 51:43

I'll work on that.

Stephanie Bowers 51:47

Pardon me if we've touched on it already. If a titer is showing no antibodies, how do you know if they still have immunity or not?

Will Falconer, DVM 51:55

Well, that goes back to the cellular immunity that we cannot measure without being in a laboratory. So, if there was a positive titer at one point, that says that there's cellular immunity also. The cells made the antibodies. And that cellular memory is what we count on to provide immunity for a long, long time, for years if not for life. So, we know that's in the background, even if the titer drops to zero. That's the, with your permission, I'll drop a link in the show notes, I see I can do that, for an article I've called "The Fallacy of Titer Testing." Let's see if I can remember the abbreviation here.
<http://vitalanimal.com/fallacy-of-titer-tests/>

Julie Anne Lee, DCH 52:34

So, Will, would you say, though, that anything above zero—because I know a lot of titer tests, they have a cutoff point where it's positive or negative. So, if it's not totally zero, or if it's, you know, just above zero, so low, a very, very low titer, you would say that that's still safe, right?

Will Falconer, DVM 52:58

Yeah, the simplest way to say it is, it's a yes-or-no question. Just like pregnancy.

Julie Anne Lee, DCH 53:02

Just like pregnancy. Yeah.

Will Falconer, DVM 53:03

Yep. Yep. If there's any number at all... The tricky part comes in reading a little bit, because they'll have a cutoff point, like you say, some of these labs, and they'll say, your animal comes in at less than 0.5. And that could mean zero, but they don't say it, but it's less than

whatever their cutoff point is. So, that's not a yes or a no, that's just says we don't know if it's zero or if there's a little bit and we didn't measure that low of a dilution to know. So, you're in a little bit of shaky ground if you say that's zero or maybe it's 0.3, and they didn't measure 0.3. But most times, you'll see some positive titer, low or no, low or high, doesn't matter. And if you've seen that once in their history, you can count on years of immunity, if not lifetime, according to the veterinary immunologists. That's what you can take home with you.

Julie Anne Lee, DCH 54:01

Is the person you were thinking about Peter Phillips?

Will Falconer, DVM 54:04

Tom Phillips. Yes. Tom Phillips and Ronald Schultz.

Julie Anne Lee, DCH 54:08

Yeah. Their original research was incredible. I can't find it.

Will Falconer, DVM 54:13

Yeah, I've got a copy on my site somewhere. It's in Current Veterinary Therapy. I think it's volume number 11. And I quote it on my site, I'll just dropped a link into the efficacy...

<http://vitalanimal.com/vacc-efficacy/>

Julie Anne Lee, DCH 54:25

Because I think if you try to search, I used to be able to search for it and find it online. And I don't think you even, I don't think you can now.

Will Falconer, DVM 54:33

That could be. There's a link to an article on efficacy and it's got their quote from it, but yeah, Current Veterinary Therapy, it's a textbook, so it comes out every four years in latest and greatest edition. To my knowledge, it's not something that's, you know, put up online, it's for sale. So, that may be the reason.

Stephanie Bowers 54:55

That's too bad.

Will Falconer, DVM 54:56

Yeah, it's available for purchase, but it's a big purchase.

Julie Anne Lee, DCH 55:01

The other thing I wanted to mention really quickly, too, is the Merck Manual. And I used to say to people where, if you look on the vaccine pamphlets, and it says do not vaccinate animals in ill health, or something like that. I can't even remember what it is.

Will Falconer, DVM 55:21

Only for use in healthy dogs, cats, ferrets.

Julie Anne Lee, DCH 55:23

Right. And then if you go into the Merck Manual, and you look at what that means, the

majority of animals right now shouldn't be, based on that, shouldn't be getting vaccinated, because they aren't, according to the Merck Manual, healthy. So, I mean, that's the other thing. If your animal's had anything, like Cushing's, or allergies, or IBD, or separation anxiety, all of that is considered they aren't healthy. So, typically, they shouldn't be getting vaccinated if they aren't really healthy. Would you agree with that?

Will Falconer, DVM 56:01

Yeah, I've got an article on that as well. If you look up the word waiver on my site, that's an automatic waiver. So, if they're on a special diet, why are they on a special diet? Because they're ill. If they're on a thyroid medication, every, I think they give it daily, why are they on a thyroid medication? Because their thyroid is sick. So, all of those things are ignored in conventional practice. They say, "Well, he's not got a fever today, there's no snot running out of his nose. He's healthy." No, that's not true. We've got chronic disease that throws up symptoms regularly, or they're on medication, or they're getting stuff squirted in their ears every day, or they're on prednisone or whatever they're on, that's all indications that they're not well. So, following the label is something that every physician, every veterinarian is supposed to do. Many don't. But the label says, "Only for use in the healthy." That's on every vaccine. Good reason not to vaccinate, if you're impugned to get a vaccine, say, "Well, sorry, but my animals not healthy. I know it's not good to vaccinate ill health."

Stephanie Bowers 57:10

That's great, because that's some more ammo for us that are still working on building the confidence to speak as an educated owner and have the guts to go in there and know what we're talking about. So, that's super helpful as well.

Julie Anne Lee, DCH 57:25

And don't forget, for everyone that's still listening, to go on to Will's site, because I really do think it's important. We're all here, we're in a group, there's 100 people here, and I don't know how, and 100 people on Facebook right now live watching. And the energy when we're all together gives us a lot of confidence. And it gives us that group feeling. But when you're standing by yourself at the front lobby, and you have to say no, you can remember what you learned on Will's site and sort of stay in that grounded feeling.

Will Falconer, DVM 57:55

Yeah, just to add to that, I think it's a really valid thing. You want to also surround yourself with people of like mind. They say we're all the product of the five people that are closest to us in life. So, if you're hanging out with people who don't buy what we're talking about, you may want to consider hanging with people who do, so you can compare notes, so you chat together, so you support one another. And just having that cluster of people of like mind with you, that understand what maybe conventionally-minded folks don't, that in itself is a huge help.

Stephanie Bowers 58:39

Amazing. Thank you both for hanging out with us tonight. And, Dr. Will, thanks for getting up so early to be here with us. We really appreciate it. Such an awesome session. Like you said, Julie, full of energy, and just really empowering. It's super valuable. And we're grateful that you two are willing to hop on, spend your time with us, and share what you know.

Julie Anne Lee, DCH 59:04

Yeah, and we're in a very lucky time right now where, I mean, I know when Will started and when I started, there was nothing to support anybody, really, was there? Like, you know, we were trying to teach people things that they, there wasn't a lot of support. So, now when we have sites like Will's site and we can take advantage of that education, I think it's addictive and I think—not addictive for ourselves, but I think it's contagious. When you're sitting, like you said, even if they're not fully like-minded, but they're sitting on the fence and you can have a conversation over a cup of tea about what you've learned, right? And you have that excited energy and that, you know, being overwhelmed, not overwhelmed, but, just when you have that aha moment. That can be very contagious. So, thank you so much for putting that site together and allowing people to be able to get educated to support their animals and hence support really the whole planet. Really, because we're all connected, animals, plants, people.

Will Falconer, DVM 1:00:20

We are, microbiomes, little tiny bacteria in our guts outnumbering our own cells. Thanks for inviting me, Julie. I really appreciate it.

Julie Anne Lee, DCH 1:00:29

Oh, Will, thank you so much. It was so great to see you.

Stephanie Bowers 1:00:33

Thank you everyone for joining us. Good night, everyone.