



Canine Vaccines: Titters

A blood test called a titer is available to check protection against selected diseases. It tests for the level of circulating antibody in the bloodstream against that disease. Our lab sends their titer tests to Colorado State University, and about two weeks later we get the results that tells us if your pet's level indicates good or poor protection. Based on those results we can make vaccine and titer recommendations for the future. A high titer level does not guarantee protection, but is highly suggestive.

Why Do a Titer?

Titers make it possible to avoid repeating vaccines more than is necessary for your pet's protection. Any vaccine can cause an adverse reaction, either acute (e.g. vomiting, anaphylactic shock) or chronic (e.g. immune-mediated disease). It is ideal, therefore, to limit the frequency of vaccination when possible. Titers may be done for adult animals to see if they need a booster that year, and even juvenile animals to see if their puppy vaccines were effective (typically at the time of spay or neuter).



Available Titer Tests

Titer tests are available for the following canine diseases:

Distemper: Canine Distemper Virus (CDV) can cause lethargy, fever, and many symptoms related to the respiratory, gastrointestinal, and nervous systems; any body tissue may be affected. CDV can be fatal. Infection occurs by exposure of the air passages to airborne CDV particles.

Parvovirus: Canine Parvovirus (CPV) can cause inappetance, diarrhea, vomiting and weight loss; dehydration is also a serious concern. CPV can be rapidly fatal. Infection occurs by oral exposure to infected feces, and CPV can live in the environment for extended periods.

Many boarding, training, grooming, and day-care facilities now accept titers for CDV and CPV in lieu of annual vaccination. When planning for boarding, please set your titer appointment date at least three weeks ahead of the boarding date. This will allow enough time for results to come back and, if necessary, to give a booster vaccine with enough time for the immune system to mount a protective response prior to boarding.

A titer test is available for Rabies virus, but is only used to travel to certain states and countries. It is not accepted in lieu of vaccination by the state of Oregon.