
Top 10 Mistakes Dog Owners Make



By: Julia Henriques - Reading Time: 16 minutes

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We all wish our dogs could live forever, don't we?

Sadly, that's not a realistic wish.

The fact is, **dogs are dying younger** than they used to. They're getting **more cancers and other chronic diseases** than ever before.

Do you wonder why that's happening?

Well ... there are a few mistakes dog owners make ... **that may be harming their dogs.**

If you do these things, I know it's with the best intentions. They're often things your veterinarian recommends!

But you might be able to make some changes. They'll improve your dog's chances of a longer, healthier life.

So ... let's get into some ways you can help him stick around as long as possible.



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Top 10 Mistakes Dog Owners Make

I made a list of the **most common mistakes dog owners make**. Read on to learn more.

Mistake #1 Vaccinating Puppies Too Young

So, your new 8-week old puppy is the cutest thing ever ... and you want to make sure you keep him safe.

But did you know that **vaccinating him every two weeks isn't the best way to do that?**

Sure, you want to make sure he doesn't get parvovirus or distemper.

But there's a trade-off ... between the risk of disease and the risk of over-vaccinating your

puppy.

And this is why it's #1 on my list of mistakes dog owners make.

Over-vaccinating your puppy can damage him for life.

The risks include lifetime chronic diseases. Problems like **allergies, arthritis, digestive disease, autoimmune disease ... and even cancer.**

So, ideally ... you want to **minimize the number of vaccines** your puppy gets.

The conventional practice is to vaccinate puppies every two weeks or so until 16 weeks old.

Why do vets do this?

Younger puppies get maternal antibodies from their mother's milk. The **antibodies protect them from disease** until they wear off. But those **antibodies will also block the vaccine.**

So the vets are hoping to catch a window ... when the maternal antibodies are lower... but your puppy isn't yet at risk from viruses in his environment.

And that means your puppy gets far **too many vaccinations!**

He only needs **one vaccination at the right time** to be protected from disease!

So instead of vaccinating over and over again ... **follow the recommendation of veterinary immunologist Ronald Schultz PhD.**

(I'll be mentioning Dr Schultz again later. He's spent decades researching the safest... and most effective ... ways to vaccinate pets.)

Based on his research, Dr Schultz recommends giving ...

... only one vaccination for parvo, distemper and adenovirus

... when. your puppy is between 12 and 16 weeks old.

To make sure your puppy is protected ... it's a good idea to **ask your vet for a titer.** Do this three weeks after the vaccination. If there's **any amount of circulating antibody, your puppy**

is protected ... for the rest of his life.

(If you don't know what a titer is, don't worry ... I'll get to titers in the next section.)

So ... before you make decisions about vaccinating your puppy ... read more details here. [What's So Risky About Puppy Shots?](#)

And homeopathic veterinarian Dr Dee Blanco has some great options to protect your pup: [The Puppy Vaccination Dilemma](#)

Mistake #2 Repeating Vaccines Unnecessarily

You probably get a vet reminder every year to bring your dog in for his vaccines. We found out **60% of vets are still vaccinating dogs annually.**

Annual vaccinations are dangerous for your dog.

As I said earlier, **over-vaccination can cause lifelong problems** for your dog. Problems like autoimmune disease, cancer and other chronic conditions.

And it's also **completely unnecessary.**

Dr Schultz (yes, him again – told you!) ... proved with his research that most dogs are **protected for life by the shots they got as puppies.**

He's stated:

Vaccines for diseases like distemper and canine parvovirus, once administered to adult animals, provide lifetime immunity.

But for some reason, many vets are ignoring this science ... and still recommending annual vaccinations.

And others are recommending vaccination every 3 years. Even that's unnecessary.

The protection from vaccines like parvovirus and distemper usually lasts for life.

And if your vet doesn't agree with that ... you can **get a titer** to prove it.

Titers are blood tests that show the level of protection your dog has to a specific disease.

So ask your vet for a titer ... **instead of just blindly re-vaccinating** your dog.

Now ... **some vets charge exorbitant fees for titers.** (Perhaps because they'd rather keep vaccinating your dog every year?)

You don't have to pay them.

Instead, ask your vet to draw the blood and give you the sample. Mail it yourself to the Hemopet lab (complete the online submission form [here](#)) ... to get a parvo and distemper titer for only \$52.

Titers can also be useful when your **groomer, boarding kennel or trainer asks for vaccine records.**

Most of them will accept titers as proof your dog is protected. And if they don't, we suggest finding a different provider!

Here's more information on using **titers instead of annual vaccination**: [Annual Dog Vaccines: Are They Necessary?](#)

Mistake #3 Giving Combo Vaccines

Combination vaccines are also called *polyvalent vaccines*. Monovalent vaccines only contain one virus. **Polyvalent vaccines contain many viruses ... and bacteria too.**

These combinations are usually shown on your vet statement as DHLPP, DHLPPC, DA2LPPC, and so on.

Many holistic vets call these polyvalent vaccines *whombo combos*. And these same holistic vets **strongly advise against giving them.**

Unless you've firmly told your vet "no, thank you" ... your dog has probably received a

combination vaccine or two in his lifetime.

Conventional vets ... and lots of shelters and rescues ... do it because it's **easier (and cheaper) than splitting the shots up into individual ones.**

And it means your dog will almost certainly **get more vaccines than he actually needs.**

For example, when you see the 'L' in the names above, that's **Leptospirosis**. A vaccine you probably didn't want to give ... because **it's high risk and low efficacy**. But it's in the cocktail your dog got!

RELATED: [Leptospirosis In Dogs: Why The Vaccine Doesn't Work](#)

But the worst thing of all ... is the assault on your dog's body. **Injecting all these different viruses (or bacteria) at once isn't safe!**

Your dog's immune system is supposed to handle one virus, not 5 or 6 at the same time! It's already risky giving just one vaccine!

As many holistic vets will tell you ... **combo shots have much higher rates of adverse reactions**. That's especially true in small dogs and puppies.

So **ask your vet not to give them**. If your vet doesn't carry monovalent vaccines ... you may need to buy them yourself. But it's worth it to protect your dog from harm!

Read more about the problems with whombo combos ... and how to avoid them: [Combination Shots For Dogs](#).

Mistake #4 Giving Non-Core Vaccinations

Core vaccines are the "big" ones your dog usually gets as a puppy.

If you decide to vaccinate your dog, **the core vaccines** are the important ones. They're the ones that can protect your dog from life-threatening diseases:

- Rabies

- Parvovirus
- Distemper
- Adenovirus (Canine hepatitis)

But then there are the **non-core vaccines** that many vets recommend. Here are the main ones.

- [Bordetella \(Kennel Cough\)](#)
- Lyme Disease
- Leptospirosis
- Canine Influenza

Bordetella, Lyme and Leptospirosis are bacterial vaccines. They have **low efficacy rates** ... but **high risk of adverse reactions**.

Before you talk to your veterinarian about non-core vaccines ... educate yourself on **the problems with these shots**. Click on each vaccine name below to learn more.

- [Bordetella](#)
- [Lyme Disease](#)
- [Leptospirosis](#)
- [Canine Influenza](#)

You'll also find many boarding kennels, groomers and trainers asking for proof of non-core vaccines. They often ask for Bordetella (Kennel Cough) and Canine Influenza.

What they're afraid of is your dog getting sick on their premises. So some will let you **sign a waiver of liability**.

And if they won't ... consider protecting your dog from these risky vaccines ... by **finding a different facility**!

RELATED: [Non-Core Vaccines For Dogs](#)

Mistake #5 Feeding Kibble

How would you like to eat cornflakes for every meal ... every day of your life?

Because ... when you feed kibble, that's what you're giving your dog.

Imagine the boredom of the same food ... day in, day out.

Not to mention the fact that **the nutrition is so poor**. (Remember they used to say there was more nutrition in the box ... than in the actual cornflakes?)

So it's easy to see why this makes my list of mistakes dog owners make.

Here are some reasons you should stop giving your dog kibble:

Kibble Is Fake, Dead Food!

Kibble is processed at high temperatures. The heat kills what little nutrition there is in the original ingredients.

So they add in a bunch of **synthetic vitamins and minerals** ... then they can call it "complete and balanced."

Synthetic vitamins and minerals aren't well absorbed by your dog's body ... and **can be harmful long-term.**

So the result is ... **kibble doesn't provide your dog with good nutrition.**

Kibble Is High In Starchy Carbohydrates

It has to be ... that's what holds those little kibble pellets together. Your dog doesn't need starch in his diet.

Starch creates an unhealthy gut ... causing digestive and other issues. It leads to **long-term**

chronic conditions ... like allergies and skin problems.

Here's what world-renowned animal nutritionist Richard S Patton PhD has to say about starch in kibble.

Kibble Is Bad For Your Dog's Teeth

Contrary to what kibble makers tell you ... kibble does not clean your dog's teeth!

Because the food contains **no live enzymes or natural nutrients** ... and all those starches stick to the teeth ... kibble leads to dental issues.

Most kibble-fed dogs have to go under anesthesia every year or so to have their teeth cleaned. Raw fed dogs' teeth are kept naturally clean.

Kibble Contains Carcinogens

This is the most important reason of all to avoid kibble.

Your dog's food could be giving him cancer!

Kibble contains toxins ... like **aflatoxins, heterocyclic amines, acrylamides and PBDEs** (flame retardant chemicals!). These are **harmful chemicals** your dog shouldn't eat!

Nutrition expert Roxanne Stone MSc discusses these problems ... and more: Kibble: Why It's Not A Good Option For Your Dog

And, by the way ... all these problems are just as bad in all kibbles. Even "premium" kibbles and expensive veterinary prescription foods!

So do your dog a favor and get him on a **whole food, preferably raw meat-based diet**. It might seem expensive ... but you'll probably save with lower vet bills!

Feed Fresh Food

Here's how to get started if you'd like to **prepare DIY raw food**: Raw Feeding Primer: 10 Simple Rules To Get Started

Simple Rules To Get Started.

Or ... you can buy a good **pre-made frozen raw food**.

If you can't quite bring yourself to feed raw ... feed a whole food, cooked diet.

You can also feed a freeze-dried or dehydrated food if you want convenience.

Or, at the very least ... make kibble more nutritious by following holistic veterinarian Dr Jodie Gruenstern's advice.

Mistake #6 Giving Heartworm Drugs

Heartworm is a word that strikes terror into dog owners' own hearts!

And conventional veterinarians love to increase that terror.

They show you gory pictures of spaghetti-like worms in dogs' hearts. Then they tell you how horrible the conventional treatment for heartworm is.

But once again ... there's a trade-off. **The risks of heartworm preventive drugs can be worse ... than the risk of your dog getting heartworm.**

I want to highlight a few problems with the advice veterinarians give.

Heartworm Preventives

Well ... *preventive* isn't the right word. Because **they don't prevent anything**. They just kill heartworms that are already in your dog.

So ... if you give them to your dog and he doesn't have heartworms ... you're giving him a drug he doesn't need. And a drug that has some serious risks ...

The Drugs Are Neurotoxins

They kill the heartworms by paralyzing them. And that means they can also **harm your dog's nervous system**.

dog's nervous system.

And they do. Some of the side effects of these drugs include problems like **convulsions, ataxia and trembling.**

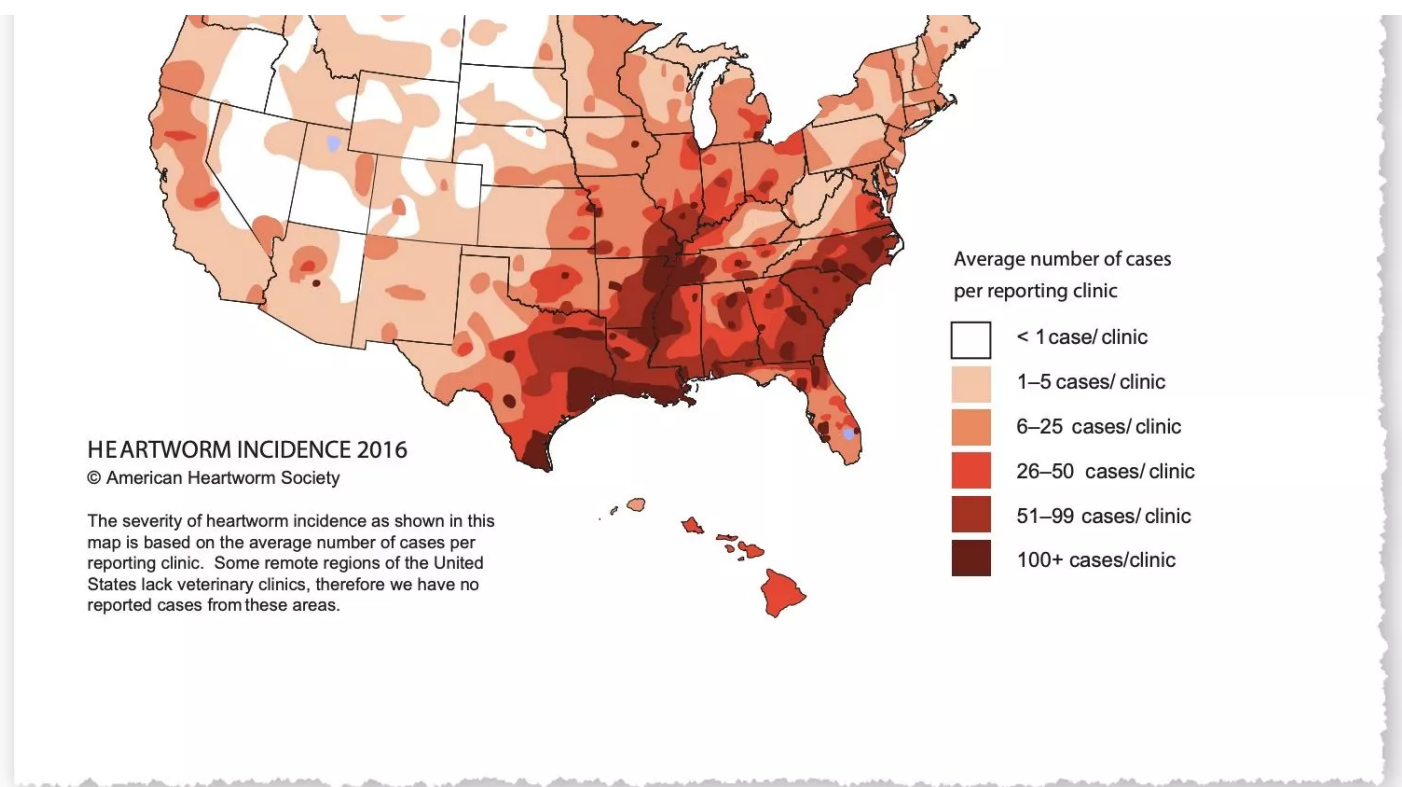
Heartworm Isn't As Common As You Think

The American Heartworm Society publishes [maps of heartworm incidence](#). The most recent map for 2016 shows:

Much of the country has fewer than 1 case per clinic

Most places have less than 5 cases per clinic.





So ask your vet how many cases they've treated before you worry about heartworm where you live!

There Are Safer Alternatives

You can find safer, natural options **to prevent and treat heartworm**. These include herbal blends, homeopathic options and other natural protocols. Ask your holistic vet about them.

So ... before you decide to give your dog heartworm drugs ... please read the true facts: [Heartworm In Dogs: 10 Things You Didn't Know](#)

Mistake #7 Applying Toxic Pest Repellents

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It seems like every year, we're told this is going to be the worst year for ticks ever.

And ticks are scary because they may carry disease they can transmit to your dog.

Fleas are more of an annoyance than a danger. But they can certainly turn your household upside down ... if they take up residence on your dog.

But many of the **pharmaceutical options** to prevent these pests ... are downright **dangerous**.

They're pesticides ... and they come in two different formats.

Oral Drugs

These days you can buy an oral drug ... that's supposed to protect your dog from pests for a month ... or three. But the problem with these drugs is that they have some horrible side effects.

They include really serious reactions ... like seizures and even death! Check out the stories on these two Facebook groups:

[Does Bravecto Kill Dogs?](#)

[Does Nexgard Kill Dogs?](#)

And ... because these drugs are oral ... once they're in your dog, he's stuck with them. So **if he has a reaction ... you have no way to get them out of his system**.

RELATED: [Bravecto, Nexgard and Simparica: Are These Oral Flea And Tick Preventives Safe?](#)

Spot-On Products

The spot-on products may seem safer. And of course, the makers assure you ... that your dog's organs don't absorb the pesticides.

dog's organs don't absorb the pesticides.

But there's **research showing that's not true.**

Dr Deva Khalsa explains the risks of the spot-on chemicals.

So ... there are safer, more natural ways to keep pests off your dog.

You can buy many natural sprays to keep the bugs away.

You can even **make some insect repellent recipes yourself!**

Even the best-protected outdoorsy dog may pick up a tick once in a while ... so here's what to do to remove them.

And if your dog does get fleas ... here are canine herbalist Rita Hogan's solutions for dealing with them.

Mistake #8 Treating Ailments With Pharmaceuticals

Giving your dog medications has its own set of risks. I'm going to focus on a couple of important ones ... antibiotics and NSAIDs.

Antibiotics

So ... let's say your dog has an infection ... that your vet says needs antibiotics.

What do you do? Surely a few days of pills can't hurt too much, right?

Well ... not so fast.

Antibiotics can have long-lasting effects on your dog's gut health.

Gut health is vital to overall health. About **80% of your dog's immune system starts in the gut** ... where the good bacteria (or probiotics) live.

Antibiotics kill all bacteria. Not just the bad ones ... but also **the good ones that protect**

him from disease. So this is worse than just a bit of tummy upset.

In fact, research shows that the gut never really recovers from antibiotic use. So **gut** damage can mean **lowered resistance to all kinds of disease ... for life**.

So, before you agree to give your dog antibiotics ... do some research into natural antibiotic solutions.

And if you do ever have to give your dog antibiotics ... follow veterinarian Dr Chloe Ross's recommendations to help clean up the damage!

NSAIDs

NSAIDs are **non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs**. Names like Rimadyl and Metacam might sound familiar to you. Conventional vets hand them out liberally!

They use them for anything from pain after surgery ... to arthritis or sprains and strains.

One major problem is that **NSAIDs actually cause joint damage!** Yes, that's right! The very thing you may be trying to treat with these drugs ... can get worse!

And it's not that they don't help reduce pain and inflammation. They do. **But it comes at a cost.**

Homeopathic veterinarian Dr Todd Cooney says "ditch the NSAIDs."

Read his alarming information about the side effects of NSAIDs ... and his advice for what to do instead.

In general ... **most drugs don't actually cure anything**. What they do is **suppress symptoms**.

And that **drives the disease deeper into the body** ... where it may come back in another (worse) form. Sometimes that might even be cancer.

Natural solutions like **homeopathy or small herbal doses** ... **support the body's own healing**. And they do it without suppressing symptoms.

It's a really good idea to find a homeopathic or holistic vet... **before you need one** in an

emergency. Then you'll have some **much safer options** when your dog has a problem.

Check the directory at theavh.org and ahvma.org. Most will do phone consults ... so they don't have to be local.

Mistake #9 Using Toxic Chemicals In Your Home And Your Yard

So far we've talked about lots of things you can do (or stop doing) ... to protect your dog when he's out and about.

But what about in his very own home? Are you using toxic chemicals in your house and yard?

EWG, the Environmental Working Group, reported ... back in 2008 ... that **pets have high levels of toxic industrial chemicals in their bodies.** I'd be surprised if the situation is any better today.

First, your yard. There's research showing that **lawn chemicals increase the risk of cancer in dogs.**

So, **instead of chemical herbicides and fertilizers** ... look for natural solutions.

White vinegar will kill weeds. And you can buy **chemical-free, organic fertilizers** ... or make your own compost from yard and kitchen waste.

Inside your house ... it's even more important to **use chemical-free cleaners.**

Keep in mind your dog lives on ... or very close to ... the floor most of the time. So he's breathing in those toxins constantly.

And once again, the **chemicals in many cleaning products are harmful ... even carcinogenic.**

Here are some [safe ways to clean your home](#). And they're cheap too!

One other category to avoid is ... **artificial fragrances.** These include ...

- Room sprays

- Deodorizing sprays
- Scented candles
- Laundry dryer sheets
- (Human) body lotions or cosmetics

These all contain **chemicals that can harm your dog**.

Dryer sheets are one of my personal pet peeves.

Walking around my city neighborhood ... the fake smells from dryer vents are sickening. So I can't imagine how my dogs feel ... with their much more sensitive noses.

And I've heard of people using dryer sheets to "touch up" their dogs' coats ... instead of giving a bath. Don't do this, please!

So again, seek out **natural solutions to household odor problems** ... even if your dog is causing them!

A little baking soda can go a long way!

Mistake #10 Bathing Your Dog With Harmful Shampoos

You might not think bathing your dog is risky ... but you'd be surprised.

Even shampoos that look natural ... often contain **harmful ingredients**.

Melissa Boland learned about these ingredients after she and her dog both got cancer. So she's **done the research to help you keep your dog safe**.

Here are her [Top 20 Dog Shampoo Ingredients To Avoid](#).

And beware ... because lots of shampoos **don't disclose all the ingredients** on the label. So you might need to call the company to get a full list.

Do your homework though ... it's worth it for your dog's sake!



MANAGE HEARTWORM NATURALLY



137 Reviews

HWF (formerly Heartworm Free) naturally supports the heart and circulatory system for a safe and healthy summer.

BONUS Mistake: Believing That “Natural” On A Product Label Really Is Natural!

OK, I said this was a *top 10* list. But I can’t help myself ... because I have one more. So this one’s a bonus!

And it’s another personal pet peeve. But I’ll make it quick.

You might read an ingredient label and see the word *natural*. This could be **dog treats, food, shampoo or supplements**. So you think it’s OK to use them for your dog.

Wrong. Most of the time, **ingredients described as natural ... aren’t natural at all**.

Natural is just a marketing term. There’s nothing to regulate its use. So don’t believe them. Do your own research and find out if they’re misleading you.

You’ll often see terms like these:

- Natural flavor
- Natural beef (or other meat) flavor
- Natural fragrance

Again ... there are **no regulations about using the word “natural.”**

The FDA (Food & Drug Administration) says:

“The term “natural” is often used on pet food labels, although that term does not have an official definition.”

In fact, this happens in human products too. Here’s the [FDA’s warning](#) about what “flavor” means on food packaging.

And check out [this study reported by EWG](#). **Almost half of all “natural” personal care products contain a known carcinogen.**

You can bet it’s no better in dog products!

So ... **don’t believe what the advertising ... or even the label ... says!**

If there’s one thing I hope you’ve learned from this post ... it’s to **do your research** ... and **avoid anything that could be toxic** to your dog.

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SWIPE OUR FREE VACCINATION
GUIDE

*Grab this guide to see how many
unnecessary (and potentially harmful)
vaccines your dog gets ...*

