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## Vaccine Reactions

Vaccines are important in order to keep your pets healthy. Without vaccines, your pets are more prone to contracting deadly diseases such as rabies, parvovirus, distemper, and many others. However, there are some pets that can have allergic reactions to vaccines. Read on to find out common and uncommon side effects to vaccines, and what we can do to help make your pets vaccination experience as low-stress as possible.

## Common Adverse Reactions

The goal of a vaccine is to stimulate the pet's immune system against different antigens. This stimulation of the immune system in turn causes a small amount of inflammation within the body. Because of this, it is common for us to see your pet slow down for a day or two after getting his/her vaccines. Some common, mild side effects of vaccines include lethargy, mild pain at the injection site, decreased appetite, and even a mild fever! While we don't like to see our pets feeling "dumpy" for a day or two after getting a vaccine, these adverse side effects means that the vaccines are working and are a small price to pay for protection against the more deadly diseases that we are vaccinating them against!

## Major Adverse Reactions

There are some pets that are more sensitive to certain vaccines. These pets can develop a major immune response and have more serious side effects. These side effects can include vomiting and diarrhea, hives, facial swelling, difficulty breathing, or even collapse. These adverse side effects are rare. If you suspect your pet is having a vaccine reaction, make sure you call your veterinarian right away. An anti-inflammatory injection, such as Benadryl or a steroid, may be given to help slow down the immune system's over-reaction to the vaccine.

If your pet has an allergic reaction after a vaccines, there are a couple of actions that can be done to help prevent vaccine reactions at future appointments. An injection of Benadryl can be administered prior to the vaccines at the clinic to help with the adverse effects. Your veterinary team can also instruct you on giving Benadryl tablets at home prior to the vaccine appointment to prevent a vaccine reaction. Sometimes, vaccines can be split up in order to decrease the amount of inflammation within the body at one time. Ask your veterinarian what might be the best option for your pet if he/she is more sensitive to vaccines.

Best regards,  
*Rachel Rielinger, DVM*



**Albion  
Animal Center**

**11 Wells Avenue  
Albion, PA 16402  
(814)756-4441**