

There is a discount vaccination clinic in my area where they offer Rabies vaccines for free and very cheap microchips. Is there any reason why I should go to my regular veterinarian for the vaccines instead of here?

Mobile veterinary clinics offer services at reduced costs and are located in parking lots at popular places pet owners go; pet stores, doggie day care centers, dog parks. They often offer the Rabies vaccines and some companies will offer other services. While these clinics may be helpful for those with limited funds, there are some factors you should consider.

Very few, if any, discount wellness clinics offer a physical examination by a veterinarian for your pet. Regardless of your pet's age, physical examinations should be performed at least every 12 months. These exams are important for early identification of diseases or problems that may be not apparent to you. These visits help identify weight changes, dental disease, heart murmurs, and other problems which may be a significant indicator of underlying illness. Also, the conversation with your veterinarian helps build a relationship which enables them to make tailored recommendations for your pet's care including his health, diet, exercise and behavior.

Another issue regarding clinic vaccinations is the quality of the vaccine given and its duration of protection (weeks vs. one or three years). It can be confusing trying to determine if they are the same as your regular veterinarian's. If your pet has an allergic reaction immediately after the vaccination, are they equipped to administer emergency care? If your pet becomes sick a day or so later, you may not be able to contact or receive the necessary care from them. Will the company running the vaccine clinic pay for any expenses involved due to a reaction? Standing in line for a clinic may expose your pet to infectious disease from other pets that are current on their vaccination schedule. Your veterinarian has set up a system that prevents pets that may be sick from coming in contact with your pet. Record keeping and sharing can also be difficult with the mobile clinics.

Lastly, when you support your local veterinarian, they are able to support your community. You may not realize some of the things they do in your area including volunteering their time and supplies to participate in school career fairs and educational days. They often donate free exams to shelter pets or may offer discounted services to stray or injured pets that do not have a home. They may provide free services to help injured wildlife. By supporting your area vet, they are able to help your pets live longer, healthier lives and also help the people and pets in your community.

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