A Vaccine for Alzheimer's Disease?

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An Alzheimer's vaccine is currently being tested in mice. A protein called amyloid is deposited in the brain of people with Alzheimer's disease. Researchers have found a compound that prevents the formation of these amyloid deposits. Preliminary tests have found that a vaccine containing this compound will prevent or decrease the formation of these amyloid deposits, often called 'plaques,' from forming in mice. The company is planning to submit a proposal to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to request permission to start testing the vaccine in consenting humans.

Comments from our Veterinary Staff:

An Alzheimer's vaccine would be a tremendous breakthrough in the prevention and control of this devastating disease. Amyloid has been found in the brains of older dogs with cognitive dysfunction, sometimes termed 'old dog syndrome.' A vaccine that works in one species may not work in another, but it is hopeful that a vaccine developed for Alzheimer's disease in people could be made effective in dogs as well. Currently, there is a medication called Anipryl which is approved for dogs with cognitive dysfunction. That medication does not affect amyloid deposition, but alters the chemical transmitters between nerves.