You may have read that Merial Pharmaceutical Company recently introduced a new product, Certifect, that it hopes will prevent ticks from attaching to your dog long enough to transmit Lyme disease.

I have a lot of respect for Merial and the products they have introduced to the veterinary market in the past. Certifect is actually very similar in its formula to Frontline, another Merial product. But in addition to the fipronil and methoprene in Frontline, Certifect contains amitraz.

Veterinarians have successfully used amitraz-containing medications on dogs for many years. It is quite toxic to cats. Until April, 2011, Pfizer marketed another amitraz-containing product, ProMeris, to control fleas and ticks on dogs. In March
of 2011, an article was published that linked ProMeris to a rather rare skin disease of dogs called pemphigus foliaceus (ref).

It is unclear if Pfizer withdrew the medication because of this study, or if sales of the product were not brisk enough as they claim. It is not currently known which ingredient in ProMeris likely caused the problem or if it was somehow due to their particular blend of chemical components.

In any case, more cautious veterinarians are holding off recommending the use of Certifect until the product has been on the market a while and their colleagues report back on its effectiveness and safety. I hope Certifect will prove to be both safe and effective, but I am one of those more cautious veterinarians.

October 22, 2012

Dear Dr Hines:
I am not seeking medical advice. I read your article on Certifect and I just wanted to let you know that it has caused pimphegus lesions on all 3 of my dogs. This has been confirmed by my doggie dermatologist and my veterinarian. It made them all so very sick. I had switched from Frontline to Certifect. As soon as I began using the Certifect my 2 Golden Retrievers broke out in sores and were so itchy, the Vet said it was a food allergy. I changed their diet and about two weeks later they started to get better. Two weeks later it was time to put the Certifect on again. They broke out in sores again. They got better towards the end of the month. It wasn't until the 3rd month that all 3 dogs were sick and had sores that I realized it happens 2 days after applying Certifect. I mentioned it to the DVM treating my retriever and he agreed that it was not a food allergy but that Certifect was causing it. Two of them have recovered but my American Eskimo got a secondary infection from the open sores and has not recovered for 2 months. Two rounds of Antibiotics, and topical antibiotics, Hexadene baths, etc, but she has not recovered yet and she may have to be put on very expensive antibiotic used to treat dog Mersa. Merial has yet to be of any help in this matter.
Just an FYI, because I wanted you to know that your suspicions are correct about Certfiect. I wonder how many other dogs are being treated for allergies when in fact it caused by Certifect. I would love to make a donation to your site but the truth is that I have spent more than a thousand dollars on Vet bills due to Certifect and I'm broke at this point. God Bless you for all your good work.