

Canine Parvovirus

Canine parvovirus is a highly contagious virus that can cause disease in dogs and puppies. Learn about how to recognize signs of this deadly disease early and what steps can be taken to prevent it from happening in the first place.

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Signs of Parvovirus

- **Lethargy**
- **Depression**
- **Loss or lack of appetite**
- **High fever**
- **Vomiting**
- **Diarrhea (often bloody)**

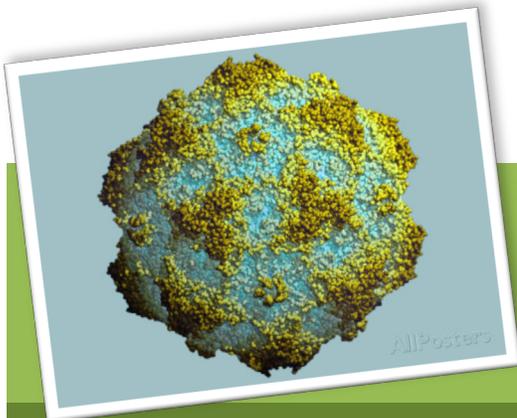
What is parvovirus, who gets it, and how can my dog become infected?

Canine parvovirus is a highly contagious, often fatal, disease caused by Canine Parvovirus type 2 (CPV-2). The disease primarily attacks the gastrointestinal tract of infected puppies and dogs. All unvaccinated puppies and dogs are susceptible to canine parvovirus, but the virus is especially dangerous when it infects puppies from 6 weeks to 6 months of age.

Rottweilers, Doberman pinschers, Labrador retrievers, American Staffordshire terriers, German shepherds, and Alaskan sled dogs seem to have an increased risk of contracting the disease. Canine parvovirus is spread rapidly via dog-to-dog contact and exposure to contaminated feces from an infected dog. Parvovirus can hide out on contaminated kennel surfaces, food and water bowls, collars and leashes, and hands and clothing of people who handle infected dogs.

What is CPV-2?

CPV-2 is the causative virus of canine parvovirus. CPV-2 is a non-enveloped, DNA containing virus that requires rapidly dividing cells for replication. CPV-2 is highly resistant to common disinfectants and detergents. This allows it to survive for long periods of time in the environment





Parvovirus: Testing, Treatment, and Prevention

If you suspect parvovirus in your puppy or dog it is very important to have them seen by a veterinarian as soon as possible. The diarrhea and vomiting associated with parvovirus can quickly result in severe dehydration, which can be deadly in young puppies. A veterinarian can perform the appropriate testing and begin treatment as soon as possible. A veterinarian can also recommend the appropriate prevention strategies to avoid having the problem in the future.

Testing

Testing of a fecal sample is one of

the best ways to diagnose parvovirus. The most common method of testing feces is with the use of an ELISA test. ELISA tests give the veterinarian rapid results so that appropriate treatment can be started as soon as possible. Your veterinarian may also draw a blood sample and run a test to determine white blood cell count in your puppy or dog. With the combination of a low white blood cell count and a positive ELISA test your veterinarian can be very confident that your dog has parvovirus.

Treatment

Treatment of parvovirus is aimed at correcting dehydration caused by vomiting and diarrhea, preventing further vomiting and diarrhea, and preventing secondary infections. During treatment, your dog or puppy will need to be kept in isolation to limit spread of the disease. Treatment can be very expensive and is often unsuccessful. The best outcomes involve early recognition of disease and aggressive treatment.

Vaccination of your puppy or dog is the single best way to prevent disease caused by parvovirus infection.

Prevention

Like many other diseases prevention is the best medicine when it comes to parvovirus. Vaccination of your puppy or dog is the single best way to prevent disease caused by parvovirus infection. Vaccination for parvovirus in puppies can start as early as 6 weeks of age and

continues every 3 to 4 weeks until the puppy is 16 weeks old. A booster vaccination should be given a year after the puppy's 16 week vaccination. Adult dogs should be vaccinated every 1-3 years depending on the prevalence of disease in your area. Puppies are not fully protected from parvovirus disease until they have received the



full round of vaccines. For this reason puppies should not go to places where many young unvaccinated dogs may congregate (parks, puppy classes, doggy daycare, etc.).

