



FOUR CORNERS
veterinary clinic

THE BASICS: CANINE PARVOVIRUS

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Parvovirus—often called just “parvo,”— is one of the most contagious and serious diseases faced by dogs. The virus is spread when a dog comes into contact with feces from an infected dog. It multiplies within the bone marrow, intestines and immune system and can cause many serious problems, including damage to your dog’s immune system and digestive tract.

- Parvo infections in puppies can have a high mortality rate, and the virus moves FAST.
- **If not treated immediately by a veterinarian, most infected pets will become severely ill and often die from dehydration, secondary infections or other complications.**
- The virus can remain infectious in contaminated areas for five months or more.
- Parvo can be contracted anywhere, but is often found in places like dog parks, kennels, shelters, pet stores and other areas where dogs tend to congregate.
- It can be prevented! Vaccinate your puppy exactly as directed by your veterinarian. Your veterinarian will generally include this vaccine in a combo vaccine; DHPP (distemper, hepatitis, parvo and parainfluenza).



WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Visit www.avma.org and search “Canine Parvovirus”

SYMPTOMS OF PARVO

Dogs infected with parvo may have very acute signs, and if you see these in your puppy or adult dog, you should seek veterinary care right away:

- **Change in appetite**
- **Lethargy or lack of energy**
- **Vomiting**
- **Frequent severe or bloody diarrhea**
- **Fever**
- **Abdominal discomfort or distention (pot belly)**
- **Dehydration**



The good news is that parvo is easily detectable and the test is fast, simple, and inexpensive. If you think your dog has parvo, get him tested as soon as possible.

TREATMENT OF PARVO

If your dog contracts parvovirus, immediate treatment is essential and the only way to save your pet. Severely affected pets, especially puppies, may need to be hospitalized for intensive treatment and supervision, which could include:

- **Intravenous (IV) fluids**
- **IV glucose to correct blood sugar levels**
- **Antibiotics to fight off secondary infections**
- **Antinausea and antidiarrheal medicine to reduce symptoms and avoid dehydration**
- **Adjustment of electrolyte levels**

HOW TO PREVENT YOUR DOG FROM GETTING PARVO

Canine parvovirus is dangerous, but it is also preventable through vaccination. That said, while parvo vaccines are very effective, they do not prevent the illness 100% of the time.

You should start vaccinating your puppy at around 6–8 weeks of age, followed by booster shots every 3–4 weeks until the puppy is 16–18 weeks old. If you adopt an adult dog, your veterinarian will talk about the right schedule for vaccinations.

Because parvo is spread easily from an infected dog to an unvaccinated dog, it's best to avoid dog parks and other areas with lots of unknown dogs until your puppy has completed his full vaccination regimen.

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