



# Parvo

## Parvo Disease is DEADLY!

### Does my puppy really need parvovirus vaccinations?

This is perhaps the most well-known and most feared virus affecting dogs. It first appeared in 1978 and most of those first infected dogs did not survive. The subsequent development of a parvo vaccine has made large outbreaks rare and has limited the disease almost exclusively to puppies between weaning and about six months of age. However, that doesn't mean that adult dogs are not susceptible. Although it's not common, it's still important to protect your adult dog with annual vaccinations.

Parvo is highly contagious to unprotected dogs; the virus can remain infectious in ground contaminated with fecal material for five months or more if conditions are favorable. Extremely hardy, most disinfectants cannot kill the virus, however chlorine bleach is the most effective and inexpensive agent that works and is commonly used by veterinarians.

### Will my dog die if he gets this disease?

If your dog becomes infected with parvovirus he has about a 50-50 chance of survival. If he makes it through the first three to four days of hospitalized treatment, he will usually make a rapid recovery and be back on his feet within a week. It is vital however, that he receives supportive therapy immediately. It must be stressed that this is not a bad case of doggy flu; without medical treatment, most puppies die.

Often, puppies that are treated aggressively in the hospital have an 85-90% chance of survival.

### What are the symptoms of parvo?

Symptoms usually begin with a fever, lethargy, depression, and loss of appetite. Secondary symptoms appear as severe gastrointestinal distress, such as vomiting and bloody diarrhea. In many cases, dehydration, shock, and death follow. The good news however, is that if the dog recovers from the intestinal form of parvo, no long term effects have been documented.

### Are some breeds more susceptible than others?

For some reason, Rottweilers and Doberman Pinschers seem to succumb to parvo faster and with less chance of recovery than any other breed. But they are not alone. We have treated everything from Cocker Spaniels to Labradors to mixed breeds.



## Parvo Continued...

---

### **If the breeder gave my puppy a parvo vaccine isn't he protected?**

Puppies need booster vaccines at regular intervals. Why all the fuss over an exacting vaccine schedule? Well, one booster just won't do the trick. That's because researchers are uncertain exactly when maternal immunity diminishes and the vaccine can break through to provide the pup with his own immunity. It can happen as early as six weeks of age or as late as 14 weeks.

Indian Hills Animal Clinics recommends a series of three boosters given every three weeks starting at about six weeks of age. During this time he should not be exposed to unvaccinated dogs.



If you try to vaccinate a puppy when there is a high level of maternal antibody around, that antibody will interfere with the vaccination. It does so by simply taking the antigen that your veterinarian immunized the puppy with out of circulation very quickly. Because we don't know when the maternal antibodies wear off, we continue to try to introduce the new antigen through a succession of vaccines.

### **How can I socialize my puppy if he can't be around other dogs?**

It is very important to introduce a variety of sights, smells and sounds to your puppy, however you don't want to risk infection from another dog. The best way to handle this is to take your puppy over to your friends' and family's homes where he can romp with protected adult dogs.

Most obedience classes for puppies, as well as boarding kennels, require parvo immunizations. This doesn't mean your puppy can't get the virus, but it provides the best insurance available to safeguard your new companion.

## **Prevention!**

If your pet becomes infected, please keep in mind that dogs with parvo shed the virus in their feces and are extremely contagious to other dogs. Follow these recommendations to help prevent the spread of this disease.

- ♦ Keep the infected dog isolated from all other dogs for at least one month after full recovery.
- ♦ Clean up all stools in your yard.
- ♦ Use a 1:30 ratio of chlorine bleach and water to clean food and water bowls (4 oz. in 1 gallon of water). Wash any bedding the dog has been in contact with in this same bleach solution and hot water. You should also try to disinfect any other areas that the dog has been, like linoleum, concrete kennels, crates, etc.
- ♦ If you have any other dogs that are two years old or younger, or who have never been vaccinated for parvo, please bring them in for a booster as soon as possible.
- ♦ After treatment in the hospital, be sure to feed your dog a bland diet, such as Canine Prescription i/d, until he is fully recovered. When switching back to his normal diet, mix the regular food with the i/d for 2-3 days to help your pet gradually adjust to the change.
- ♦ Rest assured that parvovirus is specific to dogs alone and cannot be transmitted to humans or other pets of a different species, such as cats.