

Prevent your dog from getting parvo

Canine parvovirus is dangerous, but it's also preventable through vaccination.

Canine parvovirus top tips

- **It can be prevented**—vaccinate your puppy exactly as directed by your veterinarian.
- **It's easily detectable**—if you fear your dog has parvo, get him tested as soon as possible. It's fast, easy and inexpensive. The IDEXX SNAP® Parvo Test is the best way.
- **It's a fast-moving virus**—dogs that receive immediate treatment are far more likely to survive. Don't hesitate to go to your veterinarian.



Canine health

Canine parvovirus. The basics.

Learn more



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PetHealthNetwork

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What every pet owner needs to know about this common and potentially deadly disease

What is canine parvovirus?

Often called just “parvo,” canine parvovirus is one of the most contagious and serious of diseases faced by dogs. Parvo infections in puppies can have a high mortality rate.

How does a dog get parvo?

Canine parvovirus is spread when a dog comes into contact with feces from an infected dog. The virus can remain infectious in contaminated areas for 5 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.

What does canine parvovirus do to my best friend?

Parvo multiplies within the bone marrow, intestines and immune system. As the virus matures and spreads, it can cause many serious problems and can do damage to your dog’s immune system and digestive tract. If not treated immediately by a veterinarian, most infected pets will become severely ill and often die from dehydration, secondary bacterial infections or other severe complications.

Good news about parvo

It’s easily diagnosed. Your veterinarian can use a SNAP® Parvo Test to detect parvovirus. Early diagnosis is critical to providing immediate and life-saving treatment.

It’s preventable. Parvo is a virus that can be prevented by vaccinating puppies. However, keep in mind that 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 finishes his vaccination regimen.

Symptoms

Dogs infected with parvo may exhibit some fairly severe clinical signs. If you see any of the following signs in your puppy or adult dog, take your pet to the veterinarian immediately:

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

Treatment

If the worst happens and your pet contracts canine parvovirus, immediate treatment is critical and the only way to save your pet. Severely affected pets, particularly puppies, may need to be hospitalized and undergo intensive treatment, which may include the following:

- Intravenous fluid therapy
- Adjustment of electrolyte levels
- Intravenous glucose to correct blood sugar levels
- Antibiotics to fight off secondary infections
- Antinausea and antidiarrheal medicine to reduce symptoms and avoid dehydration
- Intensive medical supervision in extremely severe cases

