

Canine parvovirus



What is canine parvovirus?

Canine parvovirus is a disease caused by a very contagious virus that provokes bloody vomiting and diarrhea and can be fatal. Parvovirus is very resistant and can survive for months in the environment (more than 7 months). Susceptible animals are usually young puppies (6weeks to 6months) and non-vaccinated dogs of all ages. Viral transmission is fecal-oral (direct contact with infected stools, or indirect contact via clothes, shoes, materials, soiled food, etc). The incubation period (time between contact with the virus and the first symptoms) is approximately 6 to 10 days.

What are the symptoms of parvovirus?

- 🐾 Loss of appetite
- 🐾 Vomiting
- 🐾 Diarrhea, often bloody
- 🐾 Lethargy/weakness, sometimes even results in coma
- 🐾 Abdominal pain

How can we diagnose this disease?

- 🐾 ELISA test: simple, fast and reliable. Performed at the hospital itself and requires only a small amount of stool.
- 🐾 A blood test can sometimes be performed when the result is uncertain to verify the white blood cell count.
- 🐾 PCR test: It takes longer to do and must be sent out to a laboratory, rarely necessary.



A Snap test (ELISA) lets us know in less than 5 minutes if the dog is infected with parvovirus.

Is there a treatment for canine parvovirus?

Unfortunately, there is no specific treatment for this disease. Only supportive treatments are possible:

- Intravenous fluids to rehydrate
- Injectable antibiotics to prevent a secondary generalised infection
- Anti-vomiting agents and antacids to control vomiting
- Pain medications are necessary to control the pain associated with abdominal cramps.
- A plasma transfusion is required in some cases

What is the prognosis?

Even in very severe cases that require a long stay in the hospital, our success rate is usually good with appropriate treatment, with a greater than 75% survival rate.

How can we prevent parvovirus infection?

- A good vaccination protocol is the only true way to prevent this viral infection.
- Limit contact between young dogs that have not yet received all of their vaccines and other dogs to decrease the risk of spread.
- Animals that have survived an infection are usually immune to the disease for life.

English translation by Dre Josianne Arbour, DMV, IPSAV