

Health



Prevent your dog from
getting parvo!

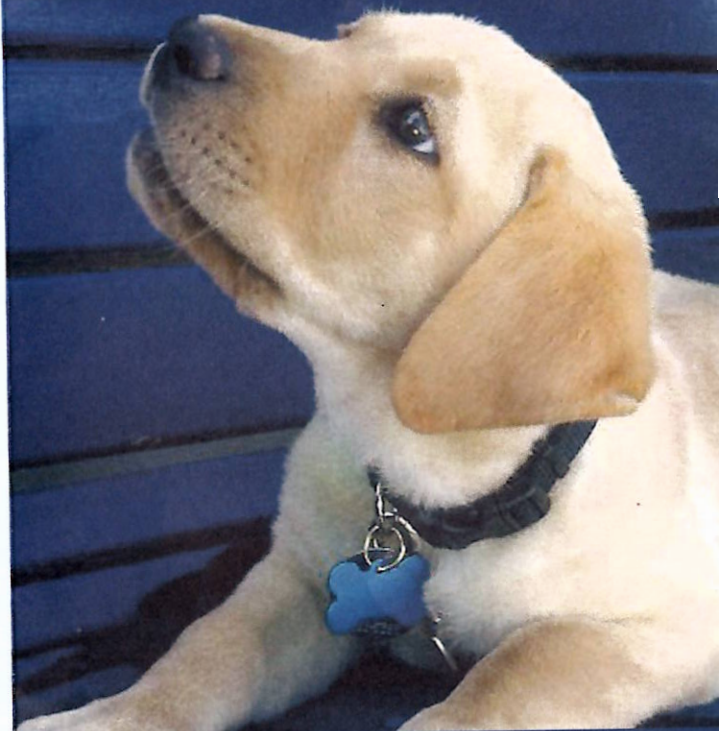
Canine parvovirus is dangerous, but it's
also preventable through vaccination.



Pet Health Network®

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Canine Parvovirus: The Basics



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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. It’s particularly serious among puppies, which can have as high as a 50% mortality rate.

How does a dog get parvo?

Canine parvovirus is spread when a dog comes into contact with an infected dog or an area contaminated with the feces of an infected dog. The virus can remain infectious in contaminated areas for five months or more. Places like dog parks, kennels, shelters and pet stores are all contaminated areas where parvo might be contracted.

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, infection or other severe complications.

Good news about parvo

It’s easily diagnosed. Using a simple test, generally a SNAP® Parvo Test, your pet’s veterinarian can take a small sample of feces and within minutes tell you if your dog has parvo. The test is very fast and inexpensive and immediate treatment is the only way to save a pet.

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 your puppy at around six or eight weeks of age, followed by booster shots every three to four 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

Parvo exhibits some fairly significant symptoms. 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, will need to be hospitalized and undergo intensive treatment, including:

- 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

Canine parvovirus top tips

- It’s a puppy killer—as many as 50% of all puppies infected will die from parvo.
- It can be prevented—vaccinate your puppy exactly as directed by your veterinarian and he won’t get parvo.
- 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 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.

