



# **CANINE PARVOVIRUS**

## **What Causes It**

The canine parvovirus (CPV) infection is caused by a highly contagious virus.

There are two different forms:-

- The more common form is the intestinal form, which results in vomiting, diarrhoea, weight loss, and lack of appetite (anorexia).
- The less common form is the cardiac form, which attacks the heart muscles of very young puppies, often leading to death.

The majority of cases are seen in puppies that are between six weeks and six months old. Early vaccination in young puppies, has resulted in the incidence of canine parvovirus infections being reduced radically.

Older dogs that are not vaccinated or have not had regular boosters, can also be infected.

## **How Is It Transmitted**

It is caught by contact with faeces from infected dogs. There are heavy concentrations of the virus in an infected dog's stool, so when a healthy dog sniffs an infected dog's stool, it will contract the disease. The virus can also be brought into a dog's environment by way of shoes that have come into contact with infected faeces. Evidence has been found that the virus can live in ground soil for up to a year. It is resistant to most cleaning products, or even to weather changes. If you suspect that you have come into contact with faeces at all, you will need to wash the affected area with household bleach, the only disinfectant known to kill the virus.

## **Signs And Symptoms**

The most common symptoms are:-

- severe vomiting and diarrhoea, which can be extremely bloody (haemorrhagic gastroenteritis), resulting in dehydration
- loss of appetite

- lethargy
- The puppy can also be susceptible to other infections because the virus causes the white blood cell count to drop.

## **Treatment**

There is no specific treatment; but an infected dog may be put on a drip, giving antibiotics to prevent any secondary infections, and given medication to try to prevent vomiting.

Without any treatment about 80% of dogs with parvovirus will die.

With treatment about 85% will survive.

## **Prevention**

- Make sure that your dog is properly vaccinated, including annual booster
- make sure that you keep your puppy or unvaccinated dog away from any dogs that could possibly be infectious.
- Parvovirus is very difficult to kill and can live in the environment for over a year. If you suspect your house or garden has been infected, clean with a 1:32 dilution of bleach (1/2 cup bleach in a gallon of water). Ordinary soaps and disinfectants do not kill parvovirus. If bleach cannot be used, the virus can survive on a variety of objects, including food bowls, shoes, clothes, carpet and floors.