



## What is Parvo?

Canine parvovirus is currently the most common disease afflicting dogs in the United States. Discovered in the 1970's, within 2 years the virus spread worldwide. Parvovirus can survive in the environment for more than a year, even in extreme temperatures. Due to this resilience, it exists in almost all environments. The mortality rate can be extremely high: 91% of dogs left untreated will succumb to the infection. Aggressive treatment is often necessary, although 5-20% of dogs will still die. Luckily, parvovirus can be vaccinated against.

## How Is Parvo Spread?

Parvovirus is spread through contact with feces containing the virus. The virus is known to survive in the environment and on inanimate objects - such as clothing, food pans, and cage floors. This means any fecal material or vomit needs to be removed with a detergent before the bleach solution is used. The bleach solution should be used on bedding, dishes, kennel floors and other impervious materials that may be contaminated. The normal incubation period (time from exposure to the virus to the time when signs of the disease appear) is from 7-14 days. Virus can be found in the feces several days before clinical signs of disease appear, and may last for one to two weeks after the onset of the disease.

## Prevention of Parvo

Since parvo is such a devastating virus, one of the most significant things any dog owner can do is prevent infection of their dog. The first step in preventing parvo is vaccination. Puppies will derive some immunity from their vaccinated mother and at 7-8 weeks old they begin a series of vaccinations to create their own immunity to the virus. Parvo vaccines are a set of three vaccinations that are spaced within a period of three to four weeks.

## Symptoms

The parvo virus is passed through oral contact with the parvo virus. The virus can be spread through fomites, feces or through infected soil and once an uninfected dog comes in to oral contact with the infection through any of these means, the virus can quickly spread. It can cause **vomiting, severe diarrhea, lethargy, Inappetance, and fever**. As the intestines are affected by the virus, they become more permeable, which can result in bacterial infection throughout the body that can quickly lead to **death**. If the virus is caught quickly enough, treatment can begin and death can be prevented.

## Treatment

The treatment of parvovirus is fairly straightforward and directed at supportive therapy. Replacing fluids lost through vomiting and diarrhea is probably the single most important treatment. Intravenous administration of a balance electrolyte solution is preferred, in severe cases blood transfusions may be necessary. Antibiotic therapy is usually given to help control secondary

bacterial infections. **Antiemetic's** are given to help prevent fluid loss through vomiting and alleviate abdominal discomfort. This treatment can be expensive and also lead to extensive hospitalization. This disease can be prevented by getting your puppy vaccinated and keeping them away from public parks and other public areas, as these places may harbor the virus