

Parvo Virus

Dog parvo symptoms are of great concern to many dog owners and breeders. This article will help you to identify dog parvo symptoms and learn what you should do if you detect them in your puppy.

Although there is a cardiac variety of parvo which causes entirely different signs of disease, the most common dog parvo symptoms are caused by the intestinal form of the virus. The disease most commonly affects puppies under six months of age, and can often be fatal. Therefore, it is vital that you learn to recognize dog parvo symptoms as early as possible.

How can parvo be transmitted?

What typically happens is that a puppy eats infected soil or feces, picking up the virus, which travels to the lymphatic system in the throat and begins dividing rapidly. The virus begins pouring out of the lymph system and into the bloodstream where it attacks any rapidly dividing cells in the body. The biggest problem caused by dog parvo symptoms is when the virus reaches the intestinal tract, where it begins "eating" the intestinal wall. Dog parks and dog walks on highways are common places to contract the parvo virus.

The destruction of the intestines is what causes the key dog parvo symptoms of bloody diarrhea, strong feces odor, lack of appetite, and clear, foamy vomit. Eventually, the virus ruptures the intestinal wall, spilling feces into the abdominal cavity which causes a major infection there. The dog quickly dies from a combination of the abdominal infection and dehydration from the intestinal disturbance.

Parvo vaccine

The most important thing you can do to prevent dog parvo symptoms is to get your dog vaccinated. Puppies are the most common victims of dog parvo symptoms because the antibodies your puppy gets from his mother's milk interferes with the vaccines commonly given to puppies. Vets don't know exactly when the passive immunity from the

mama dog stops, allowing the vaccine to begin creating active immunity. For this reason, puppies are usually vaccinated at 6 - 8 weeks, then again every three or four weeks until the dog reaches about 4 months of age. This allows at least one of the vaccines to reach the dog at a time when the passive immunity has worn off, preventing any chance of your dog developing dog parvo symptoms. Dogs are then given a booster shot yearly to maintain the immunity.

How to kill parvo virus

Once your puppy has had an episode of dog parvo symptoms, you must take precautions to prevent the spread of the disease to other dogs in your home or neighborhood. The parvovirus can live as long as five months on surfaces and is resistant to many of the common disinfectants you may think to use. The only effective disinfectant is bleach, diluted at a ½ cup of bleach per gallon of water.

A dog recovering from dog parvo symptoms will still be contagious for up to a month. Your dog must be kept isolated from all other dogs, and you must be vigilant at picking up all of your dog's stools as soon as they hit the ground. Use the chlorine bleach solution to wash all surfaces your dog may have touched, including food and water bowls, bedding, linoleum floors, crates, even your yard. This will undoubtedly kill your grass, but it will keep your other dogs from dying!

And make no mistake about it, parvovirus is 90 - 95% fatal if untreated. Even with treatment, there is no guarantee dog parvo symptoms will not kill a puppy. A puppy who contracts a very virulent strain must be treated nearly immediately to save him. The lesser strain can result in horrible illness, but treatment generally reduces the mortality of dog parvo symptoms to 10%. [Return to top](#)

Treatments for parvo

Treatment is aimed primarily at undoing the damage created by dog parvo symptoms. The diarrhea and vomiting that are hallmarks of the infection quickly cause the dog to become dehydrated. The dog is typically hospitalized while IV fluids are given

to prevent further dehydration. Vitamins, sugar, and potassium are added to the IV to prevent malnutrition. Anti-nausea medications can prevent further vomiting. Antibiotics may be given to protect against secondary bacterial infections. Once the dog gets to the point where he can take food by mouth, very bland food is given to help prevent dog parvo symptoms from recurring. The symptoms of parvo in dogs are the same as parvo symptoms in puppies. However, it is important to remember that an adult dog may be exposed to the virus without ever showing any dog parvo symptoms because of the adult dog's immune strength. The lack of dog parvo symptoms doesn't mean that the dog cannot pass infected feces to other dogs. This further underscores the need for early and repeated immunizations. Return to top

Symptoms:

If your puppy displays parvo symptoms, get them to the vet quickly. Because puppy parvo are so deadly, it is important you pay careful attention to any dog parvo symptoms your dog shows. If you even suspect an infection, get your dog to the vet immediately. Many puppy diseases show symptoms like vomiting, diarrhea, and lethargy, but few are as deadly as parvo. The fecal odor, known as "parvo smell" may be tough for you to identify, but your vet will likely recognize it the minute you bring your puppy in. Supportive therapy must be provided immediately, even if the diagnosis is not yet confirmed. If your dog makes it through the first three or four days of parvo symptoms, he is likely to live. However, if you ignore the diarrhea or try to treat it at home, you risk losing your little bundle of fur quite rapidly. The best advice is not to ignore dog parvo symptoms, particularly in puppies. Better to have a non-parvo puppy treated than to have an infected puppy die from dog parvo symptoms!