

Canine Parvovirus

Parvovirus is a highly contagious, globally occurring viral disease that poses a major, sometimes fatal threat, especially to unvaccinated and young dogs. Different variants of Parvovirus are found worldwide (CPV 2a, 2b and 2c).

Parvovirus is caused by the canine parvovirus (CPV). CPV is a very resistant virus that can survive up to six months in the environment, therefore disinfection of the environment of the affected dogs must be done thoroughly.

Parvovirus infections still occur quite frequently in unvaccinated dogs, which often end deadly for the affected animals. Weaned Puppies are particularly at risk. These animals often die before reaching their third month of life as a result of the disease.

Infection occurs mainly by taking up infected faeces via contaminated food, or licking infected, environmental objects like carpets or clothes.

The severity of the parvovirus infection varies greatly and the course of the infection depends on the infectious dose and on the age and immune status of the animal. While older dogs fall ill less frequently, unvaccinated or insufficiently vaccinated young dogs up to the age of six months are at highest risk.

Different forms of the disease:

- Diarrhoea and vomiting:
The main symptoms associated with parvovirus include severe bloody diarrhoea, weakness, fever, vomiting and weight loss. Since the disease mainly affects the guts, nutrients cannot be absorbed properly from the food. In addition, an affected dog loses a lot of fluids due to the diarrhoea and vomiting, resulting in even more rapidly developing weakness.

- Heart Disease:
Especially in young dogs, parvovirus can rarely cause severe heart disease. This so-called cardiac form of parvovirus ("puppy myocarditis") mainly affects three to twelve week old puppies. They often die without showing typical signs of the disease. Only shortly before death, affected animals experience breathing difficulties and heart arrhythmia.
- Weakened immune system:
An infection with parvovirus of the bone marrow leads to a weakened immune system. Should this occur, the dog becomes more likely to develop other diseases on top of the parvovirus infection
- Blood poisoning and pancreas disease:
Other possible complications of parvovirus infection are blood poisoning (sepsis) and pancreas disease in dogs. As a result of these, deaths may occur mainly in young dogs.
- Certain breeds of dogs such as bull terriers, Doberman pinschers, Labrador retrievers and Rottweilers are more likely to be affected by parvovirus.

Diagnosis:

The diagnosis of parvovirus is based on history (especially young or unvaccinated dogs), clinical signs, and blood or faecal tests done by your veterinarian.

Treatment and prevention:

Every case of diarrhoea in puppies should be taken seriously and taking your pet to the vet as soon as possible can help prevent serious sickness. Supportive treatment until the immune system can fight the infection is crucial. Fluids should be

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administered and in some cases, an antibiotic treatment can be useful to treat accompanying bacterial infections.

Moreover, it is very important to provide good feed for your dog.

Additionally, if a dog is infected with parvovirus, he or she should be kept from spreading the disease to other dogs. Therefore he or she should be kept away from other dogs, which also means not to let them play in the same areas, or use the same food bowls, toys or blankets.

The most effective protection against parvovirus is to vaccinate against all variants (CPV 2a, 2b and 2c) of the virus in puppies.

Such protection is provided within the puppy core-vaccination.

Typically, vaccination starts at 6 weeks, and in cases with a high risk of developing the disease, vaccination can be started from the age of 4 weeks.

In case of any questions, please ask our friendly staff about puppy vaccinations or how to prevent, treat and take action in case of disease.