The Happy Dog Training Academy

What you need to know about Parvo Virus

**What everyone should know about Parvo Virus.**

The last thing anyone wants to hear is a diagnosis of parvo. Parvo in puppies is unfortunately a common disease with deadly consequences, in adults it can be just as devastating. Breeders have lost every dog in there kennels due to an out brake. Which it is why it is important for anyone dealing with puppies on a regular basis to be aware of the symptoms of parvo and what to do about it. The last thing I want to do as a trainer is to frighten you, but if I’m honest if you are a little fearful of this condition it is not a bad thing.

**What Is Parvo?** Parvo in dogs is caused by the canine parvovirus. This virus is highly contagious and spreads through direct contact with an infected dog or by indirect contact with a contaminated object. Your puppy or dog could be exposed to the parvovirus every time he sniffs, licks infected material. A dog could also contract the virus indirectly. Indirect transmission occurs when a person who has recently been exposed to an infected dog touches your puppy, or when a puppy encounters a contaminated object, like a food or water bowl, collars and leashes, and the hands and clothing of people who handle infected dogs. That’s why it’s so important to use a **parvo disinfectant.** The Veterinary Manuals classifies the virus as a disease of the stomach and small intestines, as this is where the virus does the most damage. The virus prefers to infect the small intestine, where it destroys cells, impairs absorption, and disrupts the gut barrier. Parvo in puppies also affects the bone marrow and lymphopoietic tissues, and in some cases can also affect the heart.

**Why are Puppies so at risk of Parvo?**

All puppies are at risk of contracting the virus, Puppies younger than six weeks retain some of their mothers’ antibodies. Puppies ages six weeks to six months are the most susceptible to parvo. This is assuming that the mum received her full series of parvo vaccinations. Puppies can be vaccinated against parvo at 6 weeks, some vets will not vaccinate puppies until they are 10 weeks and there second at 14 weeks, but most puppies are routinely vaccinated at 8 weeks and 10 weeks of age. They are vulnerable to the disease until they have received all their vaccination series, which means owners need to take extra precaution during this time to prevent their puppies from contracting the virus. Puppies should receive a dose of canine parvovirus vaccine before 16 weeks of age, in some cases where the area of the breeder is high risk the breeder should have given all the puppies in a litter a vaccine at 6 weeks, to develop adequate protection. The severity of parvo cases varies. Stress of weaning can lead to a more severe case of parvo in puppies, as stress weakens the immune system. A combination of parvo and a secondary infection or a parasite can also lead to a more severe case of parvo in puppies. So worming puppies is as important as vaccination.

**However, it would seem that some breeds are at increased risk.**

**Rottweilers. Doberman Pinschers, Staffordshire Bull Terriers, Springer Spaniels, German Shepherd Dogs, Labrador Retrievers.**

**How Long Are Puppies with Parvo Contagious?** Puppies and adult dogs, that have contracted parvo become contagious within 4-to-5 days of exposure. Unfortunately for conscientious owners, this time period does not always coincide with the first parvo symptoms. This means dogs can be contagious before owners even realize that they are sick. Puppies with parvo continue to be contagious for up to 10 days after clinical recovery. So, be sure to keep away from recovering dogs, with or who have had parvo. Unvaccinated and partially vaccinated dogs are particularly at risk.

**Can parvo survive outside the dog’s body?** Outside of a dog, the virus can survive indoors for at least one month, and outdoors it can survive for many months and even a year under the right conditions. Using a Proven Parvovirus Cleaner can lessen the risk. If at all possible, burn items that may have come into contact with the virous. Talk to your vet about the best way to remove the parvovirus from your home environment or kennels.

**So, what are the Symptoms of Parvo in Puppies?**

A puppy with parvo is very sick. The sooner you are able to catch the early signs of the virus, the sooner you can get your dog to the vet. Since parvo is common in young puppies, you should call your vet any time your puppy is feeling unwell, but you should also be aware of the specific symptoms of parvo in puppies.

Lethargy (your dog becomes lethargic and won’t want to do their normal routine).

Diarrhoea (yellow in colour and getting progressively watery) Projectile Diarrhoea.

Fever (Normal dogs’ temperature is 101 to 102.5)

Vomiting (Yellow in colour and can be frothy)

Loss of Appetite

Rapid Weight Loss

Weakness

Dehydration

On their own, these symptoms can be serious themselves. But be assured just because your dog may show one or more of these symptoms, it does not mean your pet has parvo. However, if you suspect your dog may have been in contact with parvo and is showing signs of illness. You should contact your vet immediately. Be sure to notify the vet’s staff ahead of time of your suspicions and your puppy’s symptoms, so that they can take the appropriate quarantine procedures to prevent your puppy from infecting other dogs. You should also contact others such as training classes, puppy day care etc.

**Treating Parvo in Puppies**

Your vet will diagnose parvo based on clinical signs and through blood work. They may also run a test called an ELISA to search for virus antigens in your dog’s poop and will perform additional diagnostic testing as needed. Sadly, there is no cure for parvo. Your vet will offer your dog supportive care over the course of the illness, treating symptoms such as vomiting, diarrhoea and dehydration and making sure that your puppy gets the nutrition needed. Serious conditions like Parvo weaken your dog’s immune system, and white blood cells, this reduces your dog’s ability to fight off secondary infections. Your vet will put your dog on a course of antibiotics to reduce the chance of these secondary bacterial infections. The vet will monitor for any other complications. **Sadly, Parvo is a potentially fatal disease.** The survival rate of dogs treated by a veterinarian is 68 percent, most puppies that survive the first three or four days make a complete recovery. Recovery times vary depending on the severity of the case, but it usually takes approximately one week for puppies to recover from parvo. Your veterinarian will walk you through the appropriate treatment in your puppy’s case, they will also advise you about any cleaning, and steps you need to take for any other puppies and dogs in your household.

**Preventing Parvo is better than curing.** Parvo is a preventable virus. All puppies and adult dogs should receive their parvo vaccinations. It is especially important that mums to be that are used for breeding receive a full course of parvo vaccinations, as the puppies will depend on the mother’s antibodies for the first few weeks of life.

You should never allow puppies to come into contact with any dogs until they have received all of their parvo vaccines. Make sure all dogs in your household are vaccinated and be very careful when taking your adult dog out when you have puppies in your care. Cleaning their paws as you should with puppies when first taking them out. Dog parks and other places where dogs congregate are potential sources of parvo, so plan on socializing your puppy in a less public environment. Over the last few years, surveys have been conducted regarding the virus. The findings have become available, it has been proven that Parvo is contracted most from parks and beaches. Where cleaning and sterilization is inadequate. Almost 92% of recorded cases came from these areas. Were as the training classes or academies, results were less than 10%, due to the cleaning and sterilization of these areas.

**Socialization and training** are very important for puppies. You can safely socialize your puppy with fully vaccinated adult dogs in an environment like your home. Puppy classes, boarding facilities, and doggy day-care facilities usually require proof of vaccination for all of their participants, but it is a good idea to contact any facility about the appropriate level of caution. **Parvo is a serious and highly contagious disease.** Understanding how parvo spreads, the symptoms of parvo, the treatment options for parvo, and the best ways to prevent parvo in puppies will help you keep your puppy safe. For more information about parvo, talk to your vet.

***Note: This article is not intended as a substitute for veterinary care. If you suspect your dog has parvo, contact your veterinarian immediately.***

***Here at the Happy Dog Training Academy, we take every precaution to keep your pet safe. We use PARVO-VIRUCIDE, before you arrive on floors and rubber mats and after every class. Our training staff use anti-virus hand cleaners, shoes are sterilised using PARVO-VIRUCIDE. After every event the walls and floors are cleaned with Anti-virus cleaners as are the areas outside the venue.***

***We take your pets health seriously, if your pet is unwell, please contact us. Please don’t come to class.***