

ALL ABOUT PARVOVIRUS

What is Parvo?

Canine Parvovirus, commonly called just "Parvo," is a viral disease that affects dogs. Without treatment Parvo is very deadly; it is estimated that 90% of dogs who are infected with Parvo and do not receive medical treatment will die. The prognosis is better for dogs who receive treatment, survival rates of dogs receiving excellent veterinary care can be as high as 80-90%, but there is still a risk of death and the cost of the veterinary care needed can be many thousands of dollars.

What are the Symptoms of Parvo?



**Lack of appetite
and lethargy**



**Fever &
vomiting**



**Diarrhea is often
severe and can
be quite bloody**

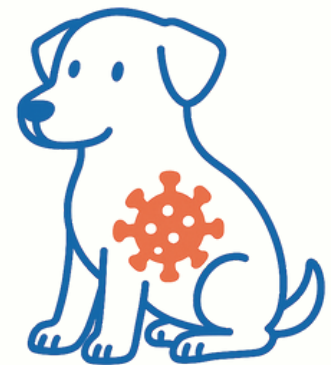
If you think your dog might have Parvo, it is important to bring them to a veterinarian for treatment quickly, outcomes are better for dogs that receive treatment sooner. There is a test to diagnose parvo that veterinarians can run in about 15 minutes.

How is Parvo Treated?

Parvo is a virus so there is no cure. Veterinarians give supportive care until the dog's own immune system can fight the virus off. The Parvo virus mainly attacks fast-growing cells found in gastrointestinal tract (stomach and intestines) and the immune system. When the virus attacks the gastrointestinal tract it causes severe vomiting and diarrhea which can lead quickly to deadly dehydration. Veterinarians give anti-nausea medication and fluids to prevent dehydration. When Parvo

attacks the immune system it kills off the white blood cells the body uses to fight infections, leaving the dog vulnerable to bacterial infections. Because the immune system is so weakened, veterinarians give antibiotics to prevent secondary bacterial infections until the dog has recovered. Additionally, dogs are syringe-fed and given other supportive care as needed. There is also a new monoclonal antibody treatment for Parvo that may reduce the length and severity of the illness.

Ideally, dogs with Parvo are hospitalized at a veterinary clinic for several days so they can receive fluids and medications through an IV catheter directly into the bloodstream. When cost is a limiting factor, dogs that are only mildly ill can sometimes receive treatment at home via medications and fluids injected subcutaneously (under the skin), but some dogs are too sick for this type of at-home treatment to be effective.

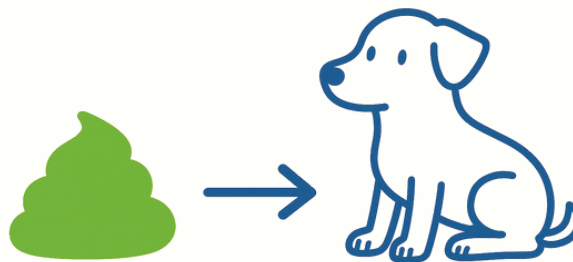


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How is Parvo spread?

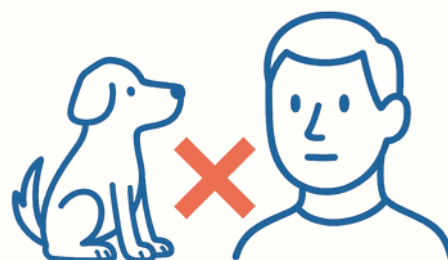
Parvo is spread via the feces of infected dogs.

The Parvo virus is very hardy and can last six months in soil or on surfaces. This means that an infected dog could defecate in a park and the virus would remain in the soil for six months or more. Someone who stepped on that patch of soil weeks later could track the virus home on their shoe accidentally and give it to their dog. The virus is resistant to most household cleaners and disinfectants like Lysol or isopropyl alcohol, the only household disinfectant that kills the parvo virus reliably is chlorine bleach diluted 1:32 (that's ½ cup per gallon) or stronger in water and allowed to remain wet on a surface for 10 minutes.



Can people catch Parvo from dogs?

No, humans cannot catch Parvo from dogs. Canine parvovirus only affects dogs and other canids like coyotes, wolves, foxes, and raccoons. There is a human virus that is also called Parvo, but it's a completely different. The word "Parvo" in Latin means "small" so the name was used a lot.



How can parvo be prevented?

Parvo is preventable with the DHPP vaccine, which also protects against Distemper, Hepatitis, and Parainfluenza. Puppies should start the vaccine at 6–8 weeks old and get boosters every 2–4 weeks until 16 weeks. Maternal antibodies can interfere, so multiple doses are needed. Unvaccinated adult dogs need two doses 2–4 weeks apart. All dogs should be vaccinated every 1–3 years as advised by a vet. Since Parvo spreads easily and lingers in the environment, young puppies should avoid high-risk areas like dog parks and only interact with healthy, vaccinated dogs.

Sources and further resources:

[College of Veterinary Medicine](#)

[Parvovirus in Dogs](#)

[Parvovirus Infection](#)

[Caring for the Recovered Dog](#)

[Canine Parvovirus](#)

[Sanitizing and Disinfecting](#)

[Vaccination and Prevention](#)

[Retrospective Study](#)

[How many Parvo shots does a puppy need?](#)

[Treatment](#)

[Clinical Efficacy](#)

[Effectiveness of Canine Parvovirus](#)

[Monoclonal Antibody](#)