

Parvovirus

Parvovirus is a highly contagious disease of dogs and puppies.

The virus causes characteristic vomiting, fever and a sudden onset of profuse smelly diarrhoea. Often infected animals rapidly dehydrate, and in severe cases progress to shock and death. Occasionally parvovirus attacks the heart muscle of puppies, and can cause sudden death. It is extremely painful for puppies and dogs.



In the Northland area there are large numbers of unvaccinated dogs enabling parvo to continue to circulate in the dog population.

Parvo is most commonly seen in young unvaccinated dogs aged 9 weeks to 18 months. Puppies and adults who have not completed their vaccine course, or their vaccinations lapse, may also contract life threatening parvo.

Parvo is passed from dog to dog by infected dog faeces. Humans and dogs can track parvo around on their feet so even dogs that have not left their own property can get the disease.

What can you DO?

- **Vaccinate !!** Our modern parvo vaccines allow a puppy to have adequate protection as early as 12 weeks of age. This means your puppy can be socialized earlier. They will have to return for their booster a year later, then every 2 years. If a puppy has one vaccination at perhaps 9 weeks, and they don't get a booster in 3 weeks time, they **WILL** be susceptible to parvo.
- **Do not take your puppy out in public places.** Your puppy is not fully protected until 2 weeks after its final vaccination. Parvo can stay in the environment for many years.
- If you think your puppy may have contracted parvo, **call your vet immediately.** Please don't let your dog enter the clinic as they are a risk to healthy dogs. Leave them in the car where the vet will examine them.

Parvo is an expensive disease. Your dog would need to be nursed in isolation for many days at the vet clinic. Early IV fluid therapy is the most important treatment for these dogs. Intravenous fluids both rehydrate and nourish the sick dog. Additional treatment includes prevention of secondary bacterial infection and drugs to control vomiting and diarrhoea.

The cost of treating parvo is at least \$1,000.00, and even then there may not be a happy outcome.

Prevention of parvovirus by vaccination is a much cheaper option.

