



## ASK THE VET

### Parvovirus: A Dangerous Disease in Our Region

Parvovirus disease is one of the most common deadly diseases contracted by dogs in our region. We seem to see an increasing number of parvovirus cases each year, especially among younger puppies. This trend is especially unfortunate since simple diligence in vaccination, can completely prevent these cases. Below, we give a general overview of the disease as well as the best way to insure that your dog is protected.

#### **Symptoms**

Parvovirus mainly attacks the digestive system, destroying the lining cells along the small intestine. Symptoms of the disease include sudden depression and uncontrolled vomiting, followed by a foul smelling, often bloody diarrhea. Untreated dogs, especially less than a year of age, often die from Parvovirus unless they receive aggressive medical treatment. If your dog shows any of these signs, please call us immediately for an examination and Parvovirus test!

#### **How is Parvovirus spread?**

The disease is spread through contact with fecal material from an infected dog. Parvovirus can survive in the soil and infect un-vaccinated dogs for up to one year. Moist areas are more likely to allow the virus to survive. **WHAT DOGS ARE AT RISK?** All un-vaccinated dogs are at high risk for Parvovirus infection, especially those under a year of age. All dogs whose vaccine was given over a year ago are also at grave risk since the vaccine only offers 12 months of protection. Parvovirus usually attacks young dogs less than one year old, however, we have seen several cases in older dogs that had been vaccinated in the past. **WHAT SHOULD I DO?** Most importantly, if your dog is showing any of the above symptoms of Parvovirus, please call to have him tested for Parvovirus. Secondly, avoid exposing your dog to stray dogs or other dogs he normally does not come in contact with. Remove any droppings that stray dogs may have left on your property and avoid walking your dog where other dogs are known to commonly visit. If your dog will be going to boarding facilities, groomers, training school, or other places where dogs are gathered, be sure their vaccines are current and that all dogs in the facility are required to have their vaccines up-to-date. Finally, check your dog's shot records; if he is due a Parvovirus vaccine, call us for an appointment to have him vaccinated.

#### **Prevention:**

##### ***Young Puppies***

Begin vaccination seven to ten days after being weaned from their mother, then repeat vaccination every two to three weeks until eighteen weeks of age. Vaccinate every year thereafter. Un-vaccinated puppies and puppies that are behind in their scheduled vaccines will be the most high risk group!

##### ***Adult Dogs***

Make sure that your dog's parvovirus vaccination is up to date and vaccinate each year in a timely fashion. If your dog is in good health, any other vaccination or preventative care needed may be done at the same time as the Parvovirus vaccination. We urge you to check your records and bring your dog in for a parvovirus vaccination according to the above protocol. With Parvovirus, an ounce of prevention will be worth much more than a pound of cure.