



# Parvovirus

FACT FRIDAY: DOG SICKNESS

# About parvovirus



Parvovirus - also called 'parvo' - is caused by a virus that spreads between dogs and is common where there are lots of pups that have not been vaccinated.

Parvo does not transfer to people or other types of animals, but is a very serious disease for dogs.

Pups pick up parvovirus from the soil or from other sick dogs.

The virus breeds up in the pup's gut, and makes the gut lining peel off. The inside of the gut then bleeds badly.



# Symptoms



The pups go off their food. They get very weak, very quickly.

Then they begin to vomit and have bad diarrhoea. The diarrhoea is often bloody looking and smells very bad. They get very dehydrated from all of the vomiting and diarrhoea.

If pups are already weak from worms and other sickness they can die before the vomiting and diarrhoea starts.

Without treatment, parvo often kills pups. Pups with parvo have the best chance of survival if they get treatment from a veterinarian as soon as they show signs of sickness.



Mother dogs give immunity to their pups through the milk. This immunity protects the pups while they are still drinking.

BUT! Once the pups are weaned, the immunity from their mum's milk runs out and the pups are at risk of getting parvovirus.

Puppies at weaning age are at most risk of getting parvo.

Vaccination and preventing pups from coming into contact with the virus are the most important ways you can keep your pups protected from parvo.



Parvovirus  
immunity

# Preventing parvovirus - Vaccination



Pups should be given vaccines  
to prevent parvovirus.

**Vaccination is the best protection for parvo!**

Ask your vet about the best times to get your puppy vaccinated. Vaccination is usually recommended as soon as the puppies stop drinking milk from their mother.



# Preventing parvovirus - avoiding exposure

Parvovirus can live in the soil for up to 18 months. It can also be spread between yards on people's shoes. This means once it is in a yard or community it is very hard to get rid of.

If you have a new puppy, until it is fully vaccinated, it is important to keep it isolated, away from other dogs, and away from places where parvovirus could be hiding.

Indoors, bleach can be used to kill the virus. There is no way to kill parvovirus that is already in the soil.

Owners that have had parvovirus in their yards within the last 18 months should speak with their vet and make sure they get any new puppies vaccinated as early as possible.

# Learn more

To learn more about parvovirus, and its treatment, go to the Parvo section of:

<https://www.amrric.org/resources/ehp-manual/chapter-8/>

For a child-friendly lesson on germs and dog sicknesses, see our resource:

<https://www.amrric.org/literacylevel/literacylevel2/view/parvovirus-lesson-plan-1-vaccinations-germs/>