



Timpanogos  
animal hospital

## **PARVOVIRAL ENTERITIS: THE MOST COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **WHAT IS “PARVO”?**

“Parvo” is short for parvoviral enteritis. This is a serious and common viral disease of dogs affecting primarily the digestive system, but can affect other body systems as well. The most common clinical signs are loss of appetite, depression, vomiting and diarrhea. The onset of illness is often sudden.

### **HOW DID MY DOG BECOME INFECTED?**

The virus is shed in high number in the stool by infected dogs. The virus can survive for months or even years in the environment. Exposure to contaminated stool can result in infection. Puppies and unvaccinated adults are the most susceptible. Rottweilers are more susceptible than other breeds.

### **HOW LONG IS THE INCUBATION PERIOD (THE PERIOD FROM EXPOSURE TO SICKNESS)?**

Susceptible dogs will usually start showing signs of illness 5-10 days following exposure.

### **IS PARVOVIRAL ENTERITIS TREATABLE?**

Infected puppies quickly become dehydrated from not drinking, or from vomiting and diarrhea. Treatment is aimed at treating dehydration and controlling vomiting and diarrhea. Injectable antibiotics are also given to prevent secondary bacterial infections. No drugs are currently available to kill the virus directly.

### **WHAT ARE MY PUPPY’S CHANCES FOR SURVIVAL?**

The prognosis is generally good with aggressive treatment as described above. The prognosis is less favorable for Rottweilers because of their unique susceptibility.

### **WHAT CAN I DO TO CLEAN UP AT HOME?**

The virus loses very little of its ability to cause infection after 3 months at room temperature; can survive 2 weeks at 100 degrees; can live 6 months in a refrigerator and up to 3 **years** in feces in the environment. This is why the virus is spread so easily from one infected dog to another and why a thorough cleanup effort is so important.

The virus can be inactivated by household bleach, excessive heat, UV irradiation, and a few select disinfectants. **Pinesol, ammonia and other household cleaners do not kill parvovirus.** Use household bleach, ½ cup per gallon of water, to clean bedding, dishes, runs, patios and other surfaces that will not be harmed by bleach.

Pick up all stool from the yard. Bleach can be used on dirt yards, but will kill lawns. Exposure to the sun (heat and UV light) is the only way to kill the virus in the lawn.

No products are currently available that are safe for household carpets. A thorough shampooing, however, would greatly reduce the number of virus particles in the carpet.

**DO MY OTHER DOGS NEED TO BE VACCINATED?**

Adult dogs that are current on vaccinations (vaccinated within the last 12 months) are at low risk for developing a clinical case of parvo. They can, however, develop a mild illness and shed the virus, thus it is recommended to get a booster vaccination if it has been 6 months or longer since the last booster.

**CAN MY CHILDREN OR CAT BECOME INFECTED?**

NO! This particular virus is specific for dogs (canine spp.)

**AFTER MY DOG HAS RECOVERED, HOW LONG UNTIL IT CAN BE VACCINATED?**

Recovered parvo patients develop a very strong immunity to parvo and are extremely unlikely to ever develop parvo again. However, it is critical that your pet is vaccinated against other infectious diseases. Vaccinations are usually given 1-2 weeks after recovery and continued at appropriate intervals as directed by your veterinarian.

**HOW LONG BEFORE MY FRIENDS/FAMILY CAN BRING THEIR DOGS OVER?**

Recovering parvo patients can shed the virus for as long as 30 days following the onset of illness. It would be safest not to allow others to bring their puppies over until those puppies have completed their initial vaccination series. Adult dogs that are current on their parvo vaccination should be able to come over following the thorough clean up previously described.

**HOW LONG BEFORE I CAN GET ANOTHER PUPPY?**

Because of the long environmental survival time of the virus, a new puppy will be at some risk in your home and yard for an extended amount of time. With aggressive clean up one could get another puppy as soon as 3 months. However, it is recommended to keep the puppy in a designated area which can be easily cleaned and disinfected until the puppy completes its initial vaccination series.