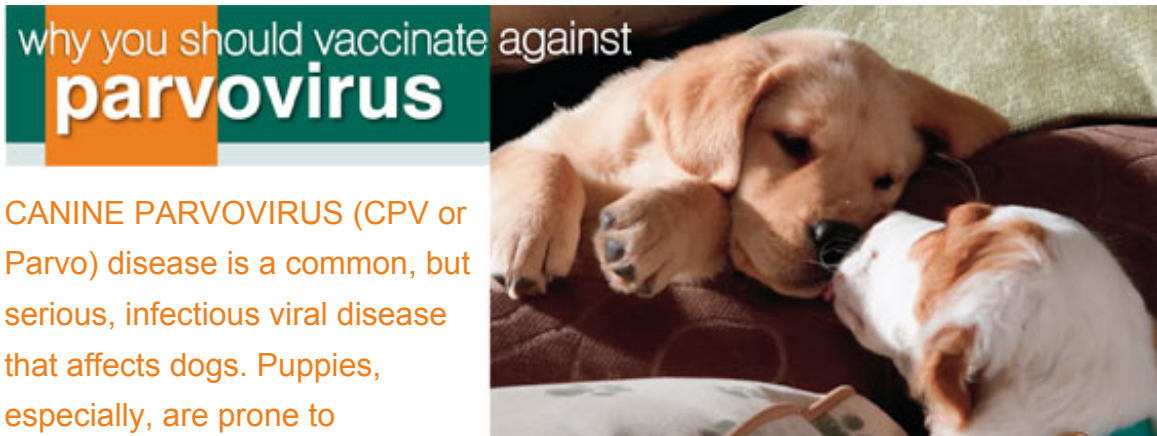


Parvovirus: Dangerous but preventable disease

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff



CANINE PARVOVIRUS (CPV or Parvo) disease is a common, but serious, infectious viral disease that affects dogs. Puppies, especially, are prone to contracting the virus because their immune systems are immature.

Once infected, the dog sheds the virus in its stool and almost anything that comes in contact with the infected dog's fecal matter can become contaminated. The Parvo organism is hardy and it can survive on clothing, food dishes, and cage floors. It can withstand adverse environmental conditions and can be transmitted by insects and rodents.

Parvo is characterized by foul-smelling, bloody diarrhea. Other symptoms include lethargy, vomiting, and fever. The virus attacks the lining of the digestive system, making it difficult, if not impossible, for the animal to absorb nutrients. It is important to note that Parvo progresses very rapidly in an unprotected dog, so if you suspect your dog is suffering with the symptoms of Parvo, seek immediate medical attention. If the diagnosis is positive, your veterinarian can guide you in the management of the symptoms and offer a plan of treatment for this life-threatening disease.

The best way to guard against this infection is to make sure your puppy has a complete vaccination series. Most [combination vaccines](#) include parvovirus, which, along with canine distemper, parainfluenza, and hepatitis, are considered core vaccines essential for all dogs. Rabies is also a core vaccine, but it is always given as a separate vaccination by a licensed veterinarian.

Consult with your veterinarian on a [vaccination schedule](#) right for your puppy. This schedule begins with puppies 6-8 weeks of age. Do not allow your puppy to socialize with other dogs or to visit areas frequented by other dogs until after the time of his last vaccination. As a concerned dog owner, you know how important it is to know the facts when it comes to your companion's healthcare. Vaccinations are a fundamental health issue that, with the right information and the help of your veterinarian, you can manage quite easily.