



Wheat Ridge
Veterinary Specialists



emergency & critical care

internal medicine

surgery

dermatology

radiology, ultrasound & CT scan

Parvovirus



Canine Parvovirus is a virus that is shed in the feces of infected dogs, and is very contagious disease that frequently occurs in puppies or poorly vaccinated older dogs. The virus affects dogs, but is not contagious to cats, birds, or humans. Once Parvovirus is in the environment, it can remain capable of causing infection for months. Infected animals will shed the virus in their feces for 30 days after infection. Within 4—7 days of exposure, a susceptible dog or puppy typically develop clinical signs of lethargy, inappetance, vomiting, and diarrhea. Until your puppy has had a series of vaccinations, each administered several weeks apart through 16 – 20 weeks of age, they may still be susceptible to developing Parvovirus in the event of an accidental exposure. For these reasons, we recommend strict confinement until your puppy's series of vaccinations have been completed by your veterinarian. Keep your puppy away from other dogs and areas where other dogs walk and defecate, to help minimize the risk of exposure.

If your puppy is showing signs of lethargy, vomiting, diarrhea or not eating, your veterinarian may recommend performing a test for Parvovirus. The test involves placing a cotton swab into your pet's rectum, similar to taking it's temperature. The cotton swab can then be tested for the presence of the virus in the pet's feces. In some cases, false positive tests will occur if your puppy has been vaccinated recently. In other cases, a false negative will occur if the virus is shed in very small numbers. Your veterinarian is trained to interpret the tests results, and may recommend bloodwork to check your puppy's white blood count (WBC) to confirm a suspected false positive or false negative test.

Parvovirus attacks rapidly dividing cells in the body, including the lining of the stomach, intestines and bone marrow. The cells lining the stomach and intestines can die, and cause signs of vomiting and sometimes bloody diarrhea. The bone marrow produces white blood cells that help your puppy fight infection. When an animal is affected with Parvovirus, white blood cell production will decrease, making your puppy more susceptible to bacterial infection. Vomiting and diarrhea can lead to severe dehydration and low blood glucose.

The gold standard of treatment for parvovirus is to administer intravenous fluids, antibiotics, anti-nausea medication to hospitalized patients. In some instances, our veterinarian may recommend a plasma transfusion to help maintain your puppy's blood protein. Affected animals may need to be hospitalized for 2 – 7 days, depending on how severe their infection is and how well they respond to therapy. Our veterinarian will give you a daily update as to your pet's progress and special needs.

Once your puppy is discharged from the hospital, you will need to keep it isolated from other dogs for at least 30 days, as they will continue to shed the virus in their feces, and can be contagious to other dogs. Pick up their feces immediately and spray the contaminated area with a 10% bleach (1 part bleach to 10 parts water) solution. Watch for signs of relapse, including inappetance, vomiting, diarrhea, and lethargy. If any signs of relapse occur, please contact a veterinarian immediately. With aggressive treatment, more than 90% of puppies with Parvovirus survive to discharge from the hospital.

**The staff of Wheat Ridge Animal is here to serve you and your pet's needs,
24 hours a day, 365 days a year.**

Don't hesitate to contact us with any questions, problems or concerns!

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