

SWVH NEWSLETTER: NOVEMBER 2008

PARVO AND YOUR PETS:

SWVH Informational Alert!

Canine Parovirus – commonly called “Parvo” – is a specific kind of virus that attacks the intestinal tracts of dogs.

Many of our clients have questions about this disease, so we’ve taken this opportunity to provide you with the following important information about Parvo to help you decide which precautions are important to you and your pets.

As with many diseases, proper vaccination is extremely important. The Parvo virus is a potentially deadly threat to unvaccinated or inadequately vaccinated puppies and even adult dogs. Prior to vaccinations, it is critical that your puppy is not exposed to the virus. The virus is extremely hardy and can survive both searing heat and subzero temperatures for long periods of time.

It is a virus that cannot be transmitted to humans; however, it is easily transmitted to other dogs through contact with the virus shed in the stool of infected dogs. Any surface or material that has come in contact with an infected dog should be cleaned with household bleach, usually diluted at ½ cup per gallon.

Parvo can cause vomiting, severe diarrhea (often bloody), depression, loss of appetite, and fever.

If any of these signs are seen in your puppy, please contact SWVH right away!



We’ve recently received a number of questions about a “new” strain of the disease. There are different strains or “mutations” of Parvo in the United States – still, all strains are treated the same way and all currently available vaccines protect against all known strains of Parvo.

The goal of treating a dog infected with Parvo is to correct and prevent life-threatening dehydration, ensure correct body temperature, and to provide anti-vomit medication and pain control. All of these steps require hospitalization and fluids given through an intravenous catheter. No treatment exists to kill the Parvo virus itself, and therefore early, supportive care is essential.

Treatment is not guaranteed – but with aggressive treatment over 75% of the Parvo cases make a full recovery.

Prevention is the best medicine! This includes requiring puppies to avoid dog parks and other public places where unvaccinated dogs may frequent until they are fully vaccinated, and getting the recommended pediatric series of vaccines and veterinarian exams.



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|| VACCINATION GUIDELINES ||

The following guidelines from the American Animal Hospital Association and SWVH provide a timeline for when, and how, puppies should be vaccinated:

- Puppies should be vaccinated beginning at 6 to 8 weeks, and then vaccinated every 3 to 4 weeks until the puppies are 16 weeks (4 months) of age with distemper, parvovirus and adenovirus vaccine (DAP). After 12 weeks of age, a one-year rabies vaccine should be administered.
- Adult dogs should be vaccinated for DAP & Rabies 1 year after the last set of pediatric vaccines and then SWVH recommends revaccinating once every three years thereafter.
- An unvaccinated or inappropriately vaccinated dog (older than 16 weeks old) should receive a series of two DAP vaccinations given 3 to 4 weeks apart and a one-year rabies vaccine.
- Vaccines must be stored and administered properly – the vaccine will not be effective if inappropriately handled. This is why vaccination by a veterinarian is recommended.
- Vaccines should only administered to completely healthy dogs. Dogs that are unfit, unhealthy or suffering from parasites may not respond to the vaccine.
- Veterinary consultation, full physical examination of the pet, and proper vaccination are important for full protection against Parvo and other diseases. The doctors and staff of SWVH are happy to answer any questions you may have about Parvo or proper vaccination of your pets.



PARVOVIRUS PROTECTION IN PUPPY CLASS:

Protecting your puppy against different viruses, including Parvo, includes getting the needed pediatric vaccine series and keeping the puppy away from public areas where the vaccine status of dogs regularly visiting that area is unknown – *i.e.*, dog parks.

HOWEVER, this does not preclude you from taking your new puppy to training/ socialization class.

In fact, the American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior believes that the standard of care for puppies is to receive such socialization *before* they are fully vaccinated (*i.e.*, completed their pediatric vaccine series). Puppy socialization classes can offer a safe and organized means of socializing puppies, and more quickly improve their responsiveness to commands.

Puppies should receive a minimum of one set of vaccines at least 7 days prior to the first class and a first deworming.

Sincerely,

The SWVH Doctors and Staff

Professional and Personal service for You and your Pets