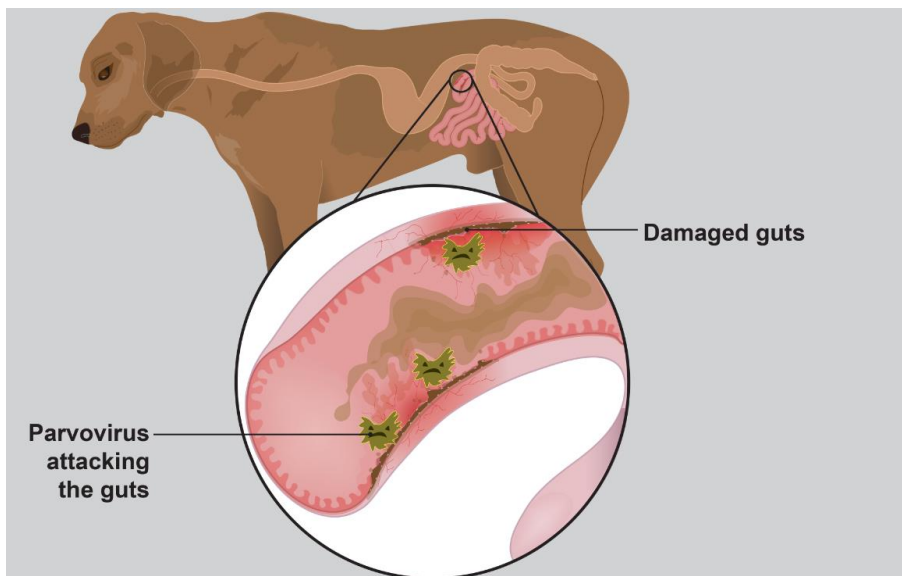


Parvovirus in dogs and puppies

Overview

- Parvovirus (parvo) is a nasty virus that attacks the intestines.
- Parvo can affect both dogs and puppies.
- Parvovirus causes severe diarrhoea and vomiting, and is often deadly if left untreated.
- Parvo is still common in the UK, with outbreaks more common in areas with lots of dogs. Our PDSA Pet Hospitals see nearly 1,500 cases of parvo each year.
- Thankfully, regular vaccination protects against parvo.



Parvovirus attacks the guts causing pain, diarrhoea and vomiting.

Symptoms

Parvovirus symptoms include:

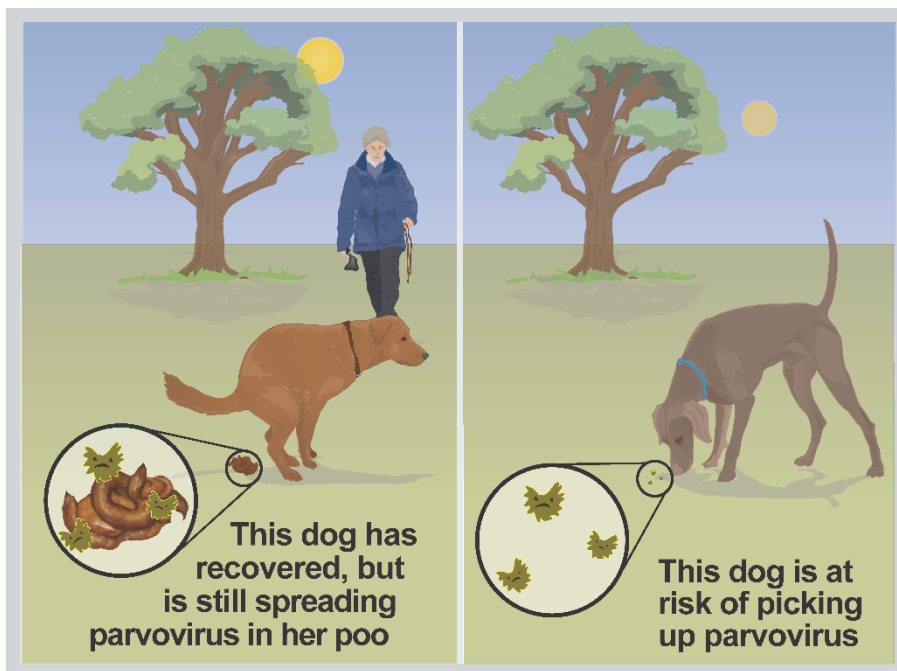
- Diarrhoea - foul smelling, watery and bloody

- Vomiting
- Eating less or off food completely
- Extreme lethargy (tiredness)
- Your dog may feel hot (or sometimes cold) to touch

Parvo symptoms often take a few days to develop, but then progress rapidly.

How did my dog get parvo?

Your dog may have caught parvovirus by coming into contact with an infected dog, or from something an infected dog has touched i.e. a contaminated dog poo, area of grass, lead, food bowl or bedding). Humans can also transfer the infection from one dog to another via their clothes or hands. Parvovirus can survive in environment for a whole year, so the risk of infection lasts a long time.



Treatment

We can't kill parvovirus, instead treatment involves medicines and intensive nursing care to help support your dog while their body fights the infection.

A fluid drip. Your dog will need a drip to replace all the fluids they have lost in their diarrhoea and vomit. Without this, they will become very dehydrated.

Intensive nursing. Your dog will need intensive nursing in a veterinary hospital to help them fight parvovirus. They will also need to be kept away from other dogs to stop parvo spreading.

Antibiotics. Your dog will need antibiotics to protect them from picking up any other nasty infections while their body fights parvovirus.

Other medications. Anti-sickness and stomach ulcer medication may be necessary.

Careful feeding. If your dog isn't able to eat, liquid food through a stomach tube may be necessary.

Ongoing care

If your dog improves enough to return home, they will need careful nursing to make sure they continue getting better. Below are some tips on how to care for your dog while they recover from parvo:

- Ensure they are drinking little and often to keep them hydrated.
- Feed them small, bland meals throughout the day – your vet will advise which food is best.
- Make sure they get lots of rest, walks won't be necessary until they are feeling much better.

- Make sure they have access to your garden or somewhere else they can go to the toilet – they may need to go more regularly than usual.
- Keep them away from other dogs and public spaces – they are likely to be infectious for a few weeks after recovery.

Survival rate

Your dog's chance of surviving parvovirus is much higher if you take them to the vet as soon as you notice any symptoms. Most dogs who receive early veterinary treatment will survive parvo but without treatment, your dog is likely to die from parvovirus.

Sadly, because it's such a nasty disease, some dogs die from parvo even if they are treated quickly - puppies are particularly at risk.

When to contact your vet

Contact your vet immediately for an emergency appointment if your dog has symptoms of parvovirus. Keep your dog in the car or wait outside your vets to help prevent the spread of parvo to other unvaccinated dogs.

If your dog has had contact with an infected dog, monitor them closely for symptoms and call your vet for advice if you are concerned. **You know your dog – if you are concerned, it's always best to contact your vet.**

Prevention

Buy or rehome a puppy responsibly

If you are getting a puppy, make sure you buy from a responsible breeder or reputable rehoming centre. Make sure you see the

puppies with their mum and that she is up to date with her vaccines. Puppies should be healthy and bright.

Regular vaccination

Vaccination (jabs/shots) is the best way to prevent your dog from getting parvo. Adult dogs need boosters regularly throughout their life, speak to your vet for more information about vaccinations.

Parvovirus sticks around

If your dog has been lucky enough to survive parvovirus they will still be infectious and able to spread parvo for a while after recovery – keep your dog away from other dogs and public spaces for a few weeks. If you have lost a dog to parvo, remember that the virus can survive in environment for up to a year. Speak to your vet before bringing a new dog or puppy into your home.

Taking an unvaccinated puppy out

Before your puppy has had their vaccinations (jabs), they are at risk of parvovirus and other nasty diseases. Ensure they stay as safe as possible by keeping them off the ground/floor in public spaces, away from unvaccinated dogs and use your garden for toilet training. Your puppy will be safe to go out for a walk and meet other dogs 1-2 weeks after their vaccinations. Speak to your vet for more information.

If you want to enrol your puppy in a puppy class we advise to do so – the chances of catching a disease are very low and the benefits far outweigh the risks.

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