



CANINE DISTEMPER VIRUS

ABOUT THE DISEASE

The **canine distemper virus (CDV)** primarily affects the respiratory, gastrointestinal, and central nervous systems.

The virus first attacks the respiratory tract, causing eye and nasal discharge, fever, coughing, and pneumonia. In more advanced stages, patients may have callusing of the nose and foot pads. Then progressing to the gastrointestinal tract, patients will develop vomiting and diarrhea. Finally the virus will progress to the central nervous system and cause seizures, tremors, imbalance, and limb weakness.

CDV transmission occurs between dogs, and the virus does not persist in the environment for extended periods of time. Most cases are seen in puppies that did not receive adequate antibody-rich colostrum milk after birth, or those that have not been sufficiently vaccinated.

Routine disinfection kills the distemper virus in kennel settings.

In multiple patient litters, there is no way to predict which patients will develop symptoms if the entire litter is exposed.

OBTAINING A DIAGNOSIS

There are no routine in-house tests available for **CDV**. A clinical diagnosis is often made by interpreting clinical history and physical exam findings.

Samples sent to reference laboratories can detect both antibodies in a patient's system as well as a definitive test (PCR) for **CDV**.

TREATMENT

There is no specific treatment for **CDV**. Management is focused on general supportive and symptomatic care while the patient hosts an immune response. Recovery from **CDV** is possible, but rare.

Most patients require hospitalization to control all symptoms.

Neurologic symptoms are often difficult to treat.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- There is no replacement for an appropriate vaccination series.
 - Please see our [Wellness Protocols](#) for additional information.
- If a patient does recover from **CDV**, it may take up to 2-3 months for the contagion to go away.