



CANINE PARVOVIRUS

ABOUT THE DISEASE

The **canine parvovirus (parvo)**, also known as **parvoviral enteritis (PVE)**, is a highly contagious virus that can cause severe and life-threatening damage and inflammation of the intestinal tract. **Parvo** works by destroying cells that line the barrier of the intestines. This will compromise the ability to absorb nutrients as well as allow bacteria and other toxins to leak from the bowel into the blood stream.

PVE is most commonly seen in unvaccinated or inadequately vaccinated puppies. Some adult patients may shed the virus in the stool without showing any symptoms.

Clinical symptoms include unwillingness to eat (anorexia), vomiting, bloody/foul-smelling diarrhea, dehydration, shock, and eventually death.

The virus is shed into the feces of infected dogs and is easily passed to other canine patients. **PVE** is very hearty and can persist in the environment for one to several years with the right conditions.

This virus is not zoonotic, which means it does not affect feline patients, nor is it transmissible to humans.

OBTAINING A DIAGNOSIS

Several rapid in-house fecal tests exist to diagnose patients. In some circumstances, if a patient is infected and showing symptoms, but not yet shedding the virus in their feces, the test may result in a false-negative.

Standard in-house blood testing is often necessary to determine the severity of the patient's secondary symptoms (white blood cell changes, loss of blood protein, blood sugar levels, etc.).

TREATMENT

There is no specific treatment for the **PVE**. Management is focused on general supportive and symptomatic care while the patient hosts an immune response.

The focus of treatment is to stop vomiting, improve appetite, allow patients to have diarrhea, and maintain hydration.

In severe cases, **PVE** patients will require hospitalization for intravenous (IV) fluids, injectable medications, and often handfeeding.

Unfortunately, the survival rate can decrease when a severely affected patient is treated at home instead of at the hospital. If patients are treated at home, all care provided needs to be with a strict quarantine from other canine patients to an area that can easily be cleaned. Caregivers are often taught how to administer fluids under the skin to help maintain hydration. Oral medications will frequently need to be given without food, as most patients are not eating well.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- There is no replacement for an appropriate vaccination series.
 - Please see our [Wellness Protocols](#) for additional information.
- Do not allow unvaccinated canine patients to have contact other unvaccinated dogs or be exposed to feces.
- Recovery from infection will provide immunity for the patient, but booster vaccinations are still required.