

Maribyrnong Veterinary Clinic

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“MARIBYRNONG VET TAILS” - WINTER 2007

The Parvo Threat

Canine Parvovirus is highly contagious and potentially life threatening, especially in young puppies as their immune systems are still immature. The virus is spread through the faeces of infected dogs and is highly resilient in the environment. In an infected dog, the virus attacks the lining of the intestines. The damage caused to intestines makes it difficult for the dog to absorb necessary nutrients and fluids, and also creates an avenue for the virus to cause system-wide infections as it gains access to the blood stream.

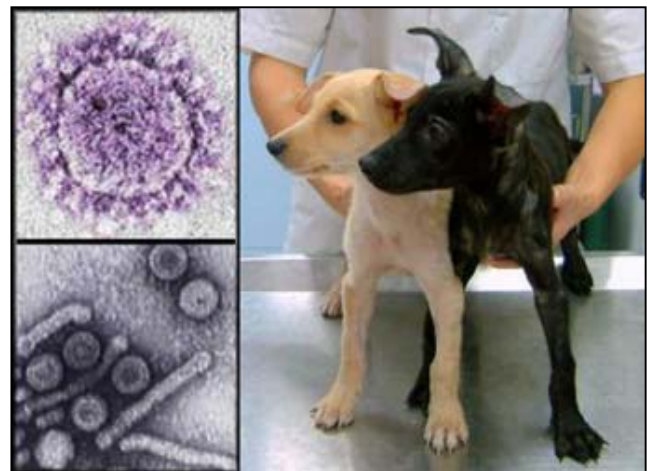
Signs and Symptoms of Parvovirus infection in your dog:

Once the virus is preventing the intestines from being able to digest food and absorb essential nutrients the result will be **vomiting** and **diarrhoea**. The damage to the intestinal lining allows bacteria from the intestines to leak into the blood stream causing **septicemia (blood poisoning)**.

Dehydration is usually extreme and requires the dog to be placed on a drip to receive IV fluids. As the illness takes hold the dog will become **lethargic**, show signs of **depression**, and will usually **stop eating**.

Survival and Treatment

Survival can often depend on how quickly the illness is diagnosed and treated. While there is no specific cure for Parvo, vet



treatment is required to support the dogs organs and natural immune system to fight the illness. This can involve IV fluids, antibiotics for secondary infections, anti-nausea medication, electrolyte regulation, stabilising body temperature and strict rest.

Prevention

All puppies from 6-8 weeks of age should be vaccinated against Parvovirus to help prevent them from contracting the deadly illness. Avoiding high risk areas such as dog parks will reduce the chance of your dog coming into contact with the virus. If your dog shows any of the symptoms related to Parvo, please contact the clinic as soon as possible.

Winter Warmers

Just as we humans enjoy snuggling up in a nice warm place in winter, so do our pets. Here are some helpful tips to keep your furry friends comfortable during our colder months:

- Keeping your pets inside during the cold months is a great idea, but if you must leave your pet outside for a prolonged period of time, make sure that they have solid shelter that is warm, protected from the wind and contains plenty of warm bedding.



- Some breeds of cats and dogs can withstand longer periods in the cold. Longer haired pets (like Samoyeds) will do better in the cold than a shorter haired pet (like a Jack Russell). Smaller pets will feel the cold faster, and very young and very old pets are vulnerable.

- Fireplaces and heaters will attract your pets, so make sure you supervise them around heat sources to make sure that no body parts get too close to flames or heated surfaces, and to ensure that they don't knock over the heat source.

- Pets with arthritis need extra special care during winter when the cold can cause their joints to be more stiff and tender. It's important that these pets be kept in a warm area and that preferably they are not required to climb up or down steps. Veterinary advice should be consulted to ensure that your pet's arthritis is being treated correctly. There are a number of dietary products that can help maintain joint health in your pet, such as Sea Flex, Sasha's Blend and Hills j/d food.

- Dog coats and jumpers are not only fashionable, but are a great way to keep your pet warm in winter. Stop by the clinic to view this season's range of dog coats.

- Cats will search out any warm area to curl up, and this can include snuggling in next to your car's engine. Cats caught in the engine when it's turned on can be seriously hurt. It's a good idea to either locate your cat before you get into your car, or tap on the hood of your car a few times before you start the engine.