

ANIMAL HOSPITAL OF LANESVILLE

1849 Highway 11 Lanesville, IN 47136 (812) 952-3643

Parvo

By Dr. Rene Wingerter

Parvo is a virus just like a cold or flu bug. It is extremely contagious and is so small that you could put enough of the virus on the head of a pin to infect every dog in Indiana. It is also hard to kill and has been shown to survive over 2 years in the soil. It can be carried on your shoes, by flies or even on the wind. No dog is safe.

The tragic story often starts the same. The puppy was fine yesterday, wouldn't eat this morning and by this evening is vomiting and won't play. You may never see the diarrhea, but if a sample is checked it is often almost pure blood. Sometimes the owners were told the puppy had all its shots or the owners did not know it was old enough to start vaccinations or they knew but "Just didn't get around to it." However, it is very important to know that a simple vaccination every 3 to 4 weeks can protect your puppy from this deadly disease.

The virus not only destroys the cells that line the stomach and intestine, it also attacks the bone marrow and lymph nodes causing the puppy's immune system to become so weak, it can't even fight off the normal bacteria that live in the intestine. Most of the puppies die from bacterial infections and dehydration caused by the virus.

Since the virus can be anywhere and the disease is so terrible, prevention through vaccinations is the best plan. The optimum schedule is vaccinations with a high titer parvo vaccine at 6, 9 and 12 weeks of age, then yearly after that. If you aren't sure whether or not your puppy has been vaccinated, then get it done now. It will not hurt your dog to get an extra dose and it could save his life. Even if the breeder tells you your puppy has had all his shots, take him to your veterinarian immediately and let them make sure this is actually the case.

Once you have had a puppy with parvo, your area is contaminated for years and your best bet from now on would be to only get older dogs that have been vaccinated for parvo. You can clean some areas with a mixture of 4 oz of bleach in a gallon of water, but you can never sterilize the dirt.

ANIMAL HOSPITAL OF LANESVILLE

1849 Highway 11 Lanesville, IN 47136 (812) 952-3643

Less than half of the puppies infected survive without treatment. With intensive veterinary care and a lengthy hospital stay more than 80% can live if the disease is caught soon enough.

If you have any questions, please call us at the Animal Hospital of Lanesville at 952-3643. 🐾