

Parvovirus

Question

What is parvovirus?

Answer

Parvovirus is a dangerous virus that attacks dogs' intestinal tracts. It can cause severe bloody diarrhea, vomiting, and electrolyte imbalances and can lead to severe dehydration, a buildup of toxins or poisons in the bloodstream, and eventually death. When puppies under 12 weeks old are infected, the virus can damage the heart muscle and cause lifelong cardiac problems. Parvovirus is extremely contagious and can be transmitted by any person, animal, or object that comes in contact with a infected dog's feces. The virus can survive extreme heat and cold for long periods of time, and may remain alive on a surface long after the feces has been removed.

There are many ways you can protect your dog from parvovirus. Most veterinarians recommend multiple vaccinations for growing puppies. As dogs get older, their immunity is maintained with annual booster shots. Uses a solution of one part bleach to thirty parts water to clean areas frequented by other dogs, and use the solution on the soles of your shoes if you think you've walked through an infected area.

If your dog experiences vomiting, severe diarrhea, depression, or loss of appetite, see your veterinarian as soon as possible. Though there are presently no drugs to kill the virus, there are treatments proven to control its symptoms.

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