

Canine Distemper

WHAT IS DISTEMPER?

Canine distemper is a contagious and potentially deadly disease caused by a virus that attacks the respiratory, gastrointestinal and nervous systems of puppies and dogs.

The virus can also be found in wildlife such as foxes, wolves, coyotes, raccoons, skunks, mink and ferrets, and has been reported in lions, tigers, leopards and other wild cats.

HOW DO DOGS GET IT?

Puppies and dogs most often become infected through airborne exposure to the virus from an infected dog or wild animal. This could be through sneezing, coughing or simply enough time in close contact.

The virus can also be transmitted through shared food and water bowls, toys and other equipment. Infected dogs can pass the virus to others for months, and mother dogs can pass the virus to their puppies before they're born.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS?

- Eye and nose discharge
- Fever
- Poor appetite
- Coughing and/or pneumonia

If not addressed, symptoms may progress to:

- Vomiting and diarrhea
- Callusing of the nose & foot pads
- Seizures, starting with snapping or tremors of the jaws, progressing to full body convulsions

Seizures are not the only sign of distemper; tremors, twitching, imbalance and limb weakness may all occur. Left untreated, symptoms may become permanent.

HOW IS IT DIAGNOSED & TREATED?

Vets diagnose canine distemper through examining symptoms and laboratory testing. There is no cure for distemper, and dogs that do survive usually have permanent, irreparable nervous system damage.

Treatment consists of supportive care and efforts to prevent secondary infections; control vomiting, diarrhea and neurologic symptoms; and combat dehydration through administration of fluids. Dogs infected with canine distemper must be separated from other dogs to minimize the risk of further infection.

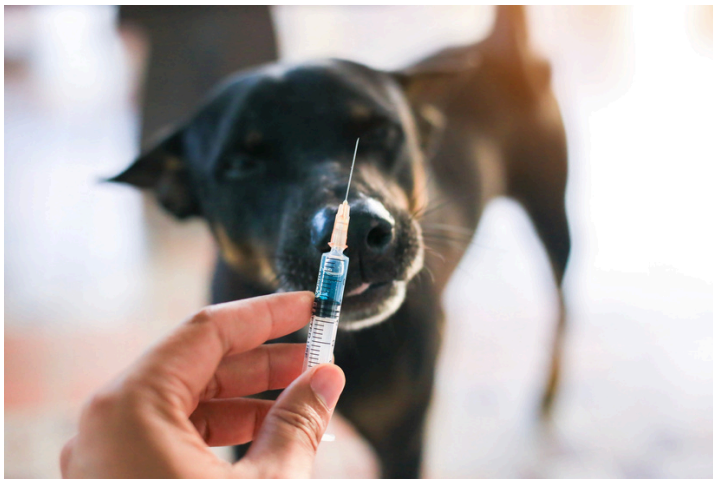




PREVENTION

Vaccination is vital in preventing canine distemper. To ensure your pet stays healthy, make sure to take them to the vet regularly and follow your vet's recommended vaccine schedule. Puppies should receive a series of vaccines to help build their immune systems, and all dogs should have DHPP boosters (the vaccine used to combat distemper and other common, contagious dog diseases) every one to two years.

- Avoid gaps in your pets vaccine schedule and make sure they are up to date
- Avoid contact with infected animals and wildlife; isolate infected dogs from other pets
- Use caution when socializing puppies at parks, obedience classes, doggy day care, etc.
- Vaccinate pet ferrets against canine distemper using a USDA-approved ferret vaccine



**IF YOU SUSPECT
YOUR PET HAS
DISTEMPER,
CONTACT YOUR
VETERINARIAN AND
SCHEDULE AN
APPOINTMENT
RIGHT AWAY.**

**Ask us about becoming a
volunteer or foster!**

