



COUNCIL BLUFFS VETERINARY CLINIC

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## Parvovirus

Parvovirus infection primarily affects the gastrointestinal system of puppies 6-16 weeks of age. Certain breeds seem to be predisposed to this infection, such as, Rottweilers, Doberman pinschers, Pit bull terriers, German shepherds, English Springer spaniels, Alaskans, and Labrador retrievers. The virus attacks the villi in the intestines. The villi are responsible for absorbing nutrients and fluid from the digestive tract. They also act as a barrier in preventing digestive bacteria from entering the blood stream. It takes approximately 2 weeks for complete villus repair. The virus is shed in the feces of infected dogs up to 12 days after infection. The virus is highly stable in the environment but is susceptible to disinfection with a 1:32 dilution of bleach.

You can decrease the chance of your dog acquiring this infection by seeing that regular parvovirus vaccinations are given starting at 6 weeks of age and boosters given every 3 weeks up to 16 weeks of age. Keep other dogs from entering the part of your yard where your dog frequently visits. Dispose of feces immediately to prevent viral contamination of the environment.

Clinical signs of infection may include: poor appetite, bloody diarrhea, vomiting, fever, depression, weight loss, and belly pain. This infection can be diagnosed with an in-hospital test from a rectal swab. In most cases, hospitalization will be recommended which will include:

1. Isolation of the dog from other animals to prevent spread of the disease and contamination of the environment.
2. Intravenous (IV) fluids to maintain hydration status, blood sugar levels, and electrolyte balance.
3. Antibiotics to control bacterial infections.
4. Parvovirus antiserum to work against bacterial endotoxins.
5. Antiemetics to control severe vomiting.
6. Anthelmintics to treat concurrent intestinal parasite infection.

Recovery usually occurs in 7-10 days, although some individuals may take longer to recover.

Please bring your dog back in 10-14 days for a recheck and an update on their vaccinations. Please bring in a stool sample at that time so that we can check for intestinal parasite infection and treat accordingly.

After the dog has gone 24 hours without vomiting, then a very small amount of water is offered. If the water is tolerated and there is no indication of nausea or the production of vomitus, then a very small amount of a bland, low fat, easy to digest diet is offered. Acceptable diet choices would include: Hill's Prescription Diet i/d, Purina EN, and Eukanuba Low Residue. Homemade options include: boiled chicken or lean hamburger, boiled rice or potatoes, or low-fat cottage cheese. The bland diet should be continued to be offered until vomiting and diarrhea cease. Then you may slowly return your dog to its original diet over the course of about 5-7 days.