

UNDERSTANDING CANINE PARVOVIRUS

We have discussed this before, mainly as a result of getting enquiries from the public having purchased a pup with this problem.

We at MIJOY have never ever had this disease - we inoculate.

Here are some extracts from a leaflet I happened to pick up at my vets last week, as well as commonly known info on this disease.

What is parvovirus??? Also referred to as cat flu although has nothing at all to do with cats.

Highly contagious disease can spread from dog to dog, puppy to puppy, directly or indirectly. Main source of contamination is faeces and infected soil etc.

The virus attacks rapidly damaging the lymph nodes, intestinal lining and bone marrow. The rapid death of the intestinal cells results in a breakaway of the intestinal lining, resulting in vomiting, diarrhoea and severe intestinal bleeding.

If not treated your pup is going to die. The smaller the pup, the more risk to the pup. This disease requires prompt treatment by your vet.

WHAT SHOULD YOU BE LOOKING OUT FOR?

- Lethargy
- Vomiting
- Anorexia
- Bloody diarrhoea with a bad smell
- Dehydration
- Eventual collapse of the animal

HOW IS THIS DISEASE TREATED?

First it is a virus, so only the symptoms can be treated not the disease itself. Your vet will treat the dog to avoid dehydration and loss of proteins.

The pup will need a lengthy stay in the clinic of more than likely, at least a week.

The pup will also receive electrolyte and fluid treatments as well as antibiotics. A symptom of this disease is severe vomiting so anti-nausea drugs will also be administered. Plasma transfusions can become necessary. Your vet may very well have to resort to force feeding or tube feeding, as most of the dogs will not eat on their own. Glucose, potassium and blood proteins will all have to be monitored closely in your ailing pup/dog and corrected by your vet if necessary.

PREVENTION IS ALWAYS BETTER THAN CURE – HOW DO YOU PREVENT YOUR DOG OR PUPPY FROM CONTRACTING THIS DISEASE.

Inoculation is THE ONLY way. All pups should receive three inoculations, the first at 6 weeks, the second at 10 weeks and the last one at 14 weeks of age.

Only at this stage, after all four inoculations, will your puppy be considered as being fully inoculated. Prior to this age you should not have your puppy out in public places. The reason - if you go to puppy classes or want to attend puppy training classes, socialising etc, they will only accept your puppy from four months of age and will insist on you supplying them with the pups proof of inoculation certificates.

What can I do to ensure my puppy I am buying from a breeder does not have this problem???

Simple – do not buy a pup that is not inoculated. Only buy a pup that is inoculated and has had the time to develop a certain amount of immunity from that initial inoculation. If the pup was inoculated by the breeder at 6 weeks of age, the best time to take your pup would be at 8 weeks of age.

Three inoculations are given that on the off chance of one not taking effect, the other two will. Hence the reason to keep your pup home and not walking the streets, until all inoculations have been given.

If there is the faintest possibility that the pup has been exposed to the parvovirus it SHOULD NOT be inoculated till sufficient time has passed to ensure it is not incubating the disease. NO pup should leave a breeder if this is a possibility. Remember – there is an incubation period for this disease to manifest in a pup. The reason that a Lady lost her pup she had purchased five days later. The pup was incubating the disease. Purchased pup day one, day four showed signs of parvo and admitted to veterinary clinic – day five – died from parvo. If a pup is incubating a disease and then is given an inoculation on top of that, the pup is going to become considerably ill as a result.

How to I overcome the problems on my property as a result of having an infected pup???

Use diluted JIK just ensure it is on the infected areas for a minimum of ten minutes before removing. If you want to disinfect areas where bleach can do damage use the F10 treatment available from your vet. It is very important that you ensure you do clean all the areas and disinfect all those areas this pup has had access to.

Remember PARVOVIRUS is a young dogs disease, so will affect puppies and young adult dogs only. This however does not mean you should ever neglect inoculating your dog. Parvo is just one of the diseases included in the dog inoculation.

Inoculations should be given annually by your vet once all three initial inoculations have been given and a complete health check done by your vet at the same time.

PLEASE remember that a lot of pups lose their lives from Parvovirus.

REMEMBER – if you intend bringing in another pup to your home where one has just died or just recovered from Parvovirus you should be careful, as the virus hangs around for a lengthy period of time, possibly infecting any new pup you may bring into the home.

How do you overcome this????

Simple, ask your breeder to inoculate your pup at 6 weeks and keep it a further four weeks when it can have its second vaccination – wait a further week before taking your new pup home. If you do not want to wait till your new pup is 11 weeks old before taking it home, hold back on buying a new pup for 6 months. It is believed that this virus can be in the environment for that length of time, still being able to infect your new puppy.

One of the most serious concerns is that of staff walking this disease onto your property, visitors etc. Can be carried on shoes etc.

REMEMBER sterilisation should be done at 6 months of age. Prior to your dog becoming sexually active. Large breed dogs will come on heat anytime from 6 months of age, the smaller breeds will in all probability come on heat at 9 or 10 months of age.