

Canine Parvovirus

Definition

Parvovirus is a **HIGHLY CONTAGIOUS** virus that attacks the intestines and causes sloughing of the inner layers of the intestine.

Causes, incidence, and risk factors

A. Causes

- The disease is usually more severe in young dogs (less than 6 months of age), old dogs, Rottweilers, and Dobermans.
- Parvovirus is resistant to extremes of temperature (i.e., it survives freezing and extreme heat) and is unharmed by detergents, alcohol, and common disinfectants.
- A dog can be a source of infection to other dogs without it having observable signs of illness (the disease may be incubating).

Parvovirus is contagious to dogs only—not to cats or people. Any age, breed, or sex of dog could be affected by parvovirus.

B. Transmission

- Transmission can occur for at least **3 weeks** after a dog becomes infected with the virus.
- Parvovirus in the environment can infect susceptible dogs for **as long as 6 months** once shed in the stool.

C. Outbreaks have been linked to:

- Direct Transmission occurs when an infected dog comes in contact with a healthy dog.
- The virus particles can be easily spread by hands, shoes, clothing, or other inanimate objects
- Contact or sniffing of infected dog's stool.
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Symptoms

- Depression
- Loss of appetite
- Fever (usually above 103F)
- Vomiting with or without blood
- Diarrhea with or without blood (more serious if blood present) Sudden death
- Crying, Weakness, difficulty breathing, gasping for breath

Treatment

Because this is a virus, there is **NO CURE**. Death from parvovirus results from dehydration, overwhelming secondary bacterial infection, blood loss from intestinal hemorrhage, or heart attack from invasion of the heart muscle by the virus.

Expectations (prognosis)

Vaccination is the most effective preventive measure for canine parvovirus disease. A properly immunized dog will have circulating antibodies in the blood that will destroy parvovirus following exposure. Dogs remain **HIGHLY SUSCEPTIBLE** to parvo until **2-4 weeks** after the last injection of the immunization series.

Prevention

Isolation of infected dogs is the method of control. Only a full series of vaccinations, with appropriate booster intervals, will help to control the source of infection, the contagious shedding dog

Cryptosporidium

Definition

Cryptosporidium enteritis is an infection of the small intestine that is caused by the parasite cryptosporidium. The main symptom is diarrhea.

Causes, incidence, and risk factors

- A. Cryptosporidium has recently been recognized as a worldwide cause of diarrhea in all age groups. Its major impact has been among those with weakened immune systems, including:
- People who take medications to suppress their immune system
 - People with HIV or AIDS
 - Transplant recipients
- In these groups, this diarrheal infection is not just bothersome. It also can lead to severe, and potentially life-threatening, loss of muscle and body mass (wasting) and malnutrition.
- B. The major risk factor is swallowing water contaminated with fecal matter. Those at higher risk include:
- Animal handlers
 - Men who have sex with men
 - People in close contact with infected individuals
 - Young children

C. Outbreaks have been linked to:

- Drinking from contaminated public water supplies
- Drinking unpasteurized cider
- Swimming in contaminated pools and lakes
- Accidentally consumption of animal feces

Symptoms

- Abdominal cramping
- Malaise
- Malnutrition and weight loss (in severe cases)
- Nausea
- Watery diarrhea, usually large-volume and multiple times a day

Treatment

There is no one treatment for cryptosporidium enteritis.

Drugs such as nitazoxanide have been used in children and adults. Other drugs that are sometimes used include:

- Paromomycin
- Trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole
- Metronidazole
- Atovaquone
- Azithromycin are sometimes used

Expectations (prognosis)

In healthy people, the infection will clear up but can last up to a month. In people who are immunosuppressed, prolonged diarrhea may cause loss of body weight and malnutrition.

Prevention

Proper sanitation and hygiene, including hand washing, are important measures in the prevention of this illness.

Feline Upper Respiratory Infection

Definition

Upper respiratory infection is a cat cold and is usually just a nuisance like a cold usually is for one of us. Sometimes, though, an upper respiratory infection can be serious. If a cat is sick enough to stop eating or drinking, hospitalization may be needed to support him or her through the brunt of the infection.

Causes, incidence, and risk factors

A. Causes

- A weekend or low immune system, *Kittens are predisposed* due to their immature immune systems are usually hit the hardest.

B. Outbreaks have been linked to:

- A cat coming into direct contact with an infected cat.
- Contact from a human caretaker, toys or food bowls.
- Cats housed in shelters are close contact with lots of other cats (*experiencing crowding stress*).

Symptoms

- Sneezing
- Nasal discharge
- Runny eyes
- Cough
- Oral or nasal ulcers
- Sniffles
- Fever
- Hoarse voice
- Or any combination thereof

Treatment

Nasal vaccination provides protection especially rapidly (3 or 4 days). Antibiotics, oral medications and/or eye ointments are commonly prescribed.

Expectations (prognosis)

Most feline colds run a course of 7 to 10 days regardless of treatment but it is important to realize that these infections can be greatly reduced with proper isolation of infected cats and kittens.

Prevention

Isolation of infected cats is the method of control.