

CANINE DISTEMPER VIRUS SYMPTOMS

Canine distemper virus (CDV) is an air-borne type and highly contagious viral disease that is often fatal and can affect the respiratory, urogenital, gastrointestinal, optic nerves and central nervous systems. Canine distemper is closely related to measles in humans so if a human has been vaccinated and is immune to measles, then they will also be immune to canine distemper. However, there is a report that humans can possibly be infected with dog distemper disease but will show no signs or symptoms at all. A large number of animal species and weasel-like animals such as lions, ferrets, foxes, wolves, coyotes, skunks, wild hogs, badgers, raccoons, pandas etc., can also develop this type of diseases. Canine distemper cannot affect or pass on to cats except other problems like skin irritations, mange, fleas, etc. Feline distemper is known as feline panleukopenia.

Puppies between 3-6 month of age are most susceptible to diseases and infection and may suffer from more serious illness conditions such as inflammatory illness of the lung (pneumonia) and acute inflammation of the brain (encephalitis) when compared with older dogs. Around 15% of canine inflammatory central nervous system diseases are caused by canine distemper virus (CDV).

Nursing puppies have a lower chance of CDV infection because a certain degree of immunity is passed down to puppies by colostrum-milk, but this can only be done by giving colostrum-milk during the first 8-24 hours after birth. Older dogs have little or no opportunity to become infected or exposed to the CDV virus because of the immunity build up, however there is a case that 7-8 year old dogs have been infected with distemper.

Seasons have direct effects on the spread of dog distemper virus. Summer season and warm weather can force CDV to become dormant and lower their prevalence rate while CDV can be most virulent during early spring, fall and winter.

The dog distemper incubation period ranges from 3-21 days in approximation and may be longer depending on other factors such as seasons, temperature etc.

Early signs and symptoms of dog distemper:

- fever
- loss of appetite (anorexia)
- mild eye inflammation (usually last two day)
- temperature rise to above 103 degree Fahrenheit
- depression
- nasal discharge
- discharge from eye (conjunctivitis)

Dogs will have the following symptoms when CDV affects the intestinal tract:

- vomiting
- diarrhea
- loss of appetite
- suddenly weak
- lethargy

Dogs will have the following symptoms when CDV affects the lungs and upper respiratory tract:

- coughing
- sneezing
- vomiting
- green discharge from nostril

- discharge eye (conjunctivitis)
- diarrhea
- cough and labored breathing (pneumonia)
- runny nose (rhinitis)
- fever (usually unnoticed)

Dogs will have the following symptoms when CDV affects the brain and spinal cord (encephalomyelitis), secondary bacterial infections:

- seizures
- poor muscle coordination (ataxia)
- uncontrollable muscle twitch (myoclonus)
- hard pad disease
- depression
- abnormal increase in sensitivity to stimuli of the senses including hearing, tasting, feeling sense (hyperesthesia)
- partial or incomplete paralysis (paresis)
- deterioration of mental abilities