

Dog Diseases

DISTEMPER

Distemper is a highly contagious viral disease. Symptoms may include seizures, lack of coordination, uncontrollable twitching and paralysis. Distemper is frequently fatal.

HEPATITIS

Hepatitis is a highly contagious virus, which is usually spread to a susceptible dog by contact with an infected individual's urine, stool, or saliva. Symptoms include fever, red eyes, and discharge from eyes, nose, and mouth. Hepatitis can be fatal.

LEPTOSPIROSIS

Leptospirosis is a bacterial disease spread through contact with contaminated urine. Symptoms include abdominal pain, ulcers in the mouth or tongue, a thick brown coating on the tongue, red eyes, bloody diarrhea, and vomiting. Leptospirosis can cause liver, kidney, and digestive tract damage. Leptospirosis is often fatal.

PARAINFLUENZA

Parainfluenza is sometimes known as "kennel cough" and is highly contagious. Several viruses can cause this disease, including Bordetella Bronchiseptica, which has a separate vaccine to combat it. Symptoms include a dry hacking cough and occasional nasal discharge. It is not life threatening, although it can be dangerous to very young puppies as it can be complicated by other programs like pneumonia.

PARVO

Canine parvovirus (Parvo) is a viral disease that attacks a dog's rapidly producing cells. These include bone marrow, lymph nodes, as well as the lining of the gastrointestinal tract. In young puppies it can affect the heart.

There are two forms of Parvo:

1. Enteric (diarrhea form)
2. Myocardial (cardiac form)

The most common type is enteric and its symptoms include depression, appetite loss, severe vomiting and diarrhea. If not treated quickly, enteric Parvo can be fatal. Myocardial Parvo affects young puppies. Puppies may suddenly die and a puppy that recovers from myocardial Parvo can develop chronic heart problems that may lead to premature death. Parvo is highly contagious and often occurs in epidemic proportions. Extreme care is critical and Parvo is one of the major reasons why puppies should not be admitted into group obedience classes before receiving vaccinations.

BORDATELLA

Bordatella is a form of Parainfluenza and is not life threatening, although dangerous in young puppies as it can be complicated by other problems like pneumonia. Symptoms include a dry hacking cough and occasional nasal discharge.

CORONA

Corona is a viral infection that can affect dogs of all ages. This contagious disease is spread through contact with oral or fecal secretions. It can be particularly dangerous to young puppies. Symptoms include loss of appetite, and moderate to severe diarrhea. Often the diarrhea is yellow-orange in color and extremely foul smelling. Corona can be fatal. Treatment for Corona is similar to that of parvovirus. Dogs that are suspected of having Corona should immediately be referred to their veterinarian.

Common Canine Health Problems

The following is a short list of other common health problems commonly seen in canines which all Professional Trainers should become familiar with:

CYSTITIS

Cystitis relates to an infection in the bladder. This is an infection common in both male and female dogs. Infected individuals urinate frequently and there may be blood in the urine. Urination may appear difficult or painful to the dog. Females sometimes have a vaginal discharge and lick the vulva often. Cystitis is treatable with antibiotics.

Cystitis is not the only type of urinary problem. Common symptoms of urinary problems include excessive drinking and urination, straining to urinate, frequent urination in small amounts, inability to urinate, uncontrollable urination, blood or pus in the urine, vomiting, hunched up posture, and weight and appetite loss.

TUMORS

Tumors usually occur in older dogs over five years of age, and are most often benign. A veterinarian should check any unusual lumps or growths immediately.

Common Canine Parasites

There are also a variety of parasites that attack dogs and can often become serious life-threatening problems. Parasites are divided into two categories: external and internal.

FLEAS

Fleas are the most common external parasite and can be more than just a nuisance. Infested dogs can suffer from blood loss, itchy skin and can contract tapeworms if untreated. Fleas may also victimize humans, and allergic reactions in both dogs and humans are not uncommon. Symptoms include excessive scratching and hair loss. Fleas can be treated, but caution is recommended. Some flea remedies are highly toxic. Refer dog owners with this problem to their veterinarian for advice.

TICKS

Ticks are a form of external parasite and can cause paralysis, anemia, and serious diseases such as Lyme disease. If you are training in an area where ticks are prevalent, instruct your student to check their dog daily for these parasites. Additionally, have owners with this problem speak to their veterinarian for proper tick control remedies.

MITES

There are many different types of mites, tiny insects that are considered to be external parasites. Dogs infested with these pests are sometimes referred to as having mange. Ear mites live in the dog's ear canals. Infected dogs will vigorously shake their heads and scratch their ears. They will sometimes moan and/or whimper in discomfort when doing so. An abundance of dark colored wax can sometimes be observed in an infected dog's ears. Ear mites are visible to the naked eye

and they appear as tiny white specks. Despite the microscopic size of mites, they are insects. Infected dogs should be referred to their veterinarian.

SCABIES

Scabies is a condition caused by a microscopic mite burrowing beneath the skin and is considered to be an external parasite. This condition is spread rapidly between dogs and can also affect humans. Symptoms include intense itching and hair loss, especially in the areas of the ears, elbows, legs, and face. If untreated, the dog's entire body can become infected. Dogs that are suspected of having scabies should be referred to their veterinarian.

HEARTWORM

Heartworms are an internal parasite caused by the bite of an infected mosquito. These parasites enter the bloodstream and mature in the dog's heart. They can reach a length of up to twelve inches. Infected dogs tire easily and suffer from chronic coughing and weight loss. They can be life threatening if left untreated. Heartworm preventative pills are available at veterinary hospitals and dogs suspected of being infected should be immediately referred to their veterinarian.

HOOKWORM, ROUNDWORM, TAPEWORM

Hookworms, roundworms, and tapeworms are internal parasites commonly found in puppies, although they can occur in dogs of all ages. These parasites can be detected in the dog's stool and can cause weight loss and occasional diarrhea. Encourage owner's to speak to their veterinarians about internal parasite prevention.