



Canine Parvo Virus...

- Is a highly contagious viral disease.
- Appears suddenly and has a high mortality rate.
- Can be prevented by vaccination.

PROGRESS IN MEDICAL RESEARCH

Canine parvo virus strikes with severity, spreads rapidly, and affects dogs of all ages. It attacks the lining of the intestinal tract causing vomiting, diarrhea, depression, dehydration and, frequently, death. In one form, canine parvo virus causes sudden death from heart disease in very young puppies.

How has animal research helped dogs with parvo virus?

In the spring of 1978 a worldwide outbreak of disease in dogs struck in epidemic proportions. Canine parvo virus, not previously recognized, was isolated in dogs in the fall of 1978. The use of dogs in finding the cause, diagnosis, transmission, and prevention of the disease was essential because this particular disease is not reproducible in small laboratory animals. However, research soon proved the disease to be similar to feline distemper for which an effective vaccine is available. This discovery, one of the greater success stories of modern veterinary medicine, led

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to the development of a vaccine for canine parvo virus within a year of the initial epidemic. Because the new vaccine was intended for dogs, it had to be carefully tested in research dogs to demonstrate its safety and efficacy before it was released for use on privately owned pets. The vaccine proved effective and stopped the outbreak almost immediately.

Is animal research still necessary on canine parvo virus?

No vaccine works one hundred percent of the time. More study is necessary to determine why some dogs do not respond to the vaccine and therefore still acquire the disease after vaccination. We also need to know why some purebred dogs, such as German Shepard, Doberman and Rottweiler, are more susceptible to the disease. Parvo virus continues to cause sickness and death, especially in puppies six to sixteen weeks of age. Puppies kept in large colonies or kennels also run a greater risk of getting the disease.

What's ahead in canine parvo virus research?

Researchers continue to look for ways to treat and prevent parvo virus in dogs not helped by vaccination. The study of the disease in laboratory dogs is essential to their search. More effective means of treatment and prevention are possible only through continued research with dogs and other animals with related disorders.

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