

## Information about Canine Distemper

<http://www.animalhealthchannel.com/pet-care-distemper/index.shtml>

Canine distemper is a contagious, serious illness caused by the canine distemper virus (CDV). Most cases of distemper in dogs can be prevented. The distemper shot, or distemper vaccine, which often is administered with the parvovirus (also called "parvo") vaccine, has reduced the incidence of canine distemper in many parts of the world. Yearly vaccination is recommended for all dogs, beginning with a two or three shot series when puppies are 6 to 12 weeks old.

Distemper affects multiple organs and causes numerous symptoms that increase in severity as the disease progresses. Distemper symptoms include fever, loss of appetite, eye inflammation and discharge, diarrhea, and secondary infections (e.g., pneumonia, infection of the brain and spinal cord). The virus can infect dogs, as well as wild carnivores, such as raccoons, skunks, coyotes, and foxes.

Here are some questions to ask your veterinarian about canine distemper. **Print this page**, check off the questions you would like answered, and take it with you to your vet. By learning more about distemper, you can help prevent CDV transmission and provide the best possible care for your dog.

### Questions to Ask Your Veterinarian about Distemper

- What makes you suspect that my dog is infected with the canine distemper virus (CDV)?
- Can this virus be transmitted to humans? If so, what steps can I take to reduce the risk for myself and my family?
- What other conditions or illnesses could be causing my dog's symptoms?
- How is the distemper virus transmitted?
- Why is my dog at risk for CDV infection?
- How will you determine if my dog has distemper and rule out other conditions?
- What types of diagnostic tests will be performed?
- How reliable are these tests?
- When will the test results be available? Should I call for the results or will someone from your office contact me?

**Telephone number to call:**

**Date to call:**

- Is canine distemper curable? Is it treatable?
- Does distemper increase my dog's risk for other health problems and complications? If so, what are the signs and symptoms of these possible complications?
- With what strain of CDV is my dog infected?
- What is the usual prognosis for dogs infected with this strain of distemper?
- Do you recommend supportive care and/or medications to treat the effects of distemper? What types of treatment do you recommend?
- What other treatment options are available?
- Even though my dog is already infected with CDV, might it be beneficial to administer a canine distemper vaccine? Why or why not?
- What steps should I take to prevent transmission of the distemper virus to other dogs, including other dogs in my household?
- What steps can I take before introducing a new puppy or dog into my household to reduce the risk for distemper virus transmission?
- If my dog recovers from distemper, how long does the risk for virus transmission last?
- How will you determine if my dog is still contagious?
- What should I do if my dog's condition worsens?  
**Telephone number to call:**
- Under what circumstances might you recommend euthanasia?
- What does euthanasia involve? Can you explain the process to me?
- Can canine distemper be prevented?
- What options are available for preventing CDV infection?
- Which type of distemper vaccine do you recommend?

- Why do you recommend this vaccine?
- What are the benefits, risks, and possible side effects of this distemper vaccine?

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**Notes/Additional Information**