

COMMON CANINE INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Bacterial & Viral Infections

Rabies is a virus that attacks the brain and is virtually 100% fatal for most mammals including dogs, cats, cows, horses, and humans. The virus is secreted in the saliva of infected animals and is most often transmitted through bite wounds. Infected animals may exhibit fearfulness, aggression, excessive drooling, difficulty swallowing, staggering, and/or seizures. After noticeable disease signs appear, the death almost always occurs within two to three days.

Canine distemper is a disease that attacks the respiratory, gastrointestinal, and nervous systems. It is highly contagious and spreads when bodily fluids such as saliva, urine, or tears from an infected dog become airborne. Signs of distemper include fever, runny nose and eyes, diarrhea, vomiting, weight loss, and seizures. Distemper is often fatal and may cause irreparable nervous system damage in dogs that do survive infection.

Adenovirus-1 which causes infectious hepatitis in the dog can affect the liver, kidneys, eyes, and other organs. It is very contagious and is spread when healthy dogs ingest the urine, feces, or saliva of an infected dog. Signs range from slight fever, congestion, and temporary clouding of the eye (a condition called “blue eye”) to prolonged bleeding, severe depression, and death. ***Adenovirus-2*** is one of the many causes of the infectious tracheobronchitis complex commonly called “kennel cough.” Symptoms include hacking cough, and sometimes runny eyes and nose.

Canine parvovirus is a serious, highly contagious disease that attacks the lining of the gastrointestinal tract. The virus can survive in the environment for long periods of time and is easily transmitted via trace amounts of contaminated feces on shoes, cages, or dogs’ hair or feet. The disease can cause lethargy, fever, and loss of appetite, as well as vomiting and severe, bloody diarrhea that can quickly lead to dehydration. In severe cases, dehydration can cause death within just 48 to 72 hours.

Leptospira is a bacterial infection that can cause liver failure, kidney failure, and can also affect other organs. It is primarily spread by contamination from infected urine either directly, via contaminated objects or via contaminated environment. This disease is also important because it can be passed to humans as well as other animal species. Disease signs include vomiting, impaired vision, and convulsions.

Bordetella is the most common and one of the most serious causes of infectious tracheobronchitis, or “kennel cough.” Infection with this bacteria can include dry hacking cough, runny eyes, runny nose, fever, loss of appetite, and unchecked it may lead to pneumonia. Transmission most often occurs via contact with the nasal secretions of infected dogs. This disease most often appears in social environments such as kennels or boarding facilities and dog parks.

Parasitic Infections

Heartworms are parasites transmitted by mosquitoes and live primarily in the heart and lungs. Their presence can cause heart failure, respiratory failure, liver failure, and chronic wasting syndromes. Treatment is available but is expensive and may not be effective if the disease is already advanced. While there is no vaccine, there are many highly effective preventive medications that dogs can take to keep from developing this disease.

Hookworms are gastrointestinal parasites transmitted when picked up from contaminated environments. Pups also get them from their mothers while nursing. These are blood sucking parasites and severe infestations can cause weakness, weight loss, diarrhea, and severe anemia. This parasite is potentially contagious to humans.

Roundworms are gastrointestinal parasites that are often transmitted from mother to pup before the pups are even born or after they are born while nursing. They can also be picked up from contaminated environments. Symptoms can include diarrhea, respiratory distress, potbelly, weakness, and general unhealthiness. This is a particularly important parasite because it can spread to humans and is a leading cause of blindness in children.

Whipworms are gastrointestinal parasites that are spread by contamination of the environment by infected dogs. Unlike hookworms and roundworms, this parasite can be very difficult to diagnose by standard methods. The main symptom is diarrhea, often chronic, and sometimes very bloody and mucoid. This parasite is not considered to be contagious to humans.

Reference: <http://www.continuumforpets.com/dog-common.asp#1>