Foster – Parvo Watch

**What is Parvo?**

Parvo (parvovirus) is a highly contagious virus that can cause serious illness and be fatal if left untreated. Parvo is a very strong virus and can remain in the environment for a long time without proper disinfection. The “incubation period” can be from 3 to 14 days from the time of exposure. While there is no cure, swift and aggressive therapies of supportive care can be highly effective and successful!

**How does it spread?**

Parvo is spread dog to dog through feces or anything that has been contaminated with feces such as hands, clothing, food bowls, toys, etc.

**Can people or cats catch Parvo?**

People cannot catch Parvo. Parvo disease in cats is known as Panleukopenia, often called “distemper”. Panleuk/distemper is a parvovirus, closely related to canine parvovirus. Unvaccinated or immune compromised kittens/cats are susceptible to parvo.

**What about other dogs or puppies?**

All dogs and puppies should be vaccinated against Parvo. Puppies must receive a series of vaccines to be fully protected and are the most vulnerable to catching this disease and becoming seriously ill. Unvaccinated adult dogs can catch Parvo, but may be symptom-free or show less severe symptoms unless old or immune compromised.

**What about my foster puppy?**

Your foster puppy had a direct exposure to another puppy that was diagnosed with parvo. This makes them a high risk of developing the disease. However, until they develop clinical signs, a test is not an effective means of determining if they will become symptomatic.

Your foster puppy will need to be monitored closely and kept in an environment away from unvaccinated or immune compromised cats and dogs, and public areas, for 2 weeks after the date of the last exposure. Any fecal material should be picked up and disposed of promptly.

Your puppy should be monitored closely for any of the following signs: vomiting, foul-smelling often bloody diarrhea, loss of appetite, fever, weakness, lethargy and dehydration. If any of these clinical signs are observed, contact the Foster Care Manager immediately. Parvo is a medical emergency. Early detection and treatment is crucial for survival.

If your puppy does test positive for parvo while in your home, your home will be contaminated. Proper cleaning and disinfecting of all surfaces and objects the puppy came into contact will be imperative. You will receive further direction on disinfecting if this should occur. For that reason, it would be beneficial to keep the puppy in an area that can easily be cleaned. The puppy will return to the shelter for continued treatment and care following a diagnosis.

**If your foster puppy shows signs of illness**, please contact the Foster emergency number 734-717-4424

Non-emergent concerns, please email [Fosters@hshv.org](mailto:Fosters@hshv.org) or call 734-661-3520