



PARKSIDE veterinary group

DISTEMPER info

Canine distemper is caused by a virus. It is usually transmitted directly between dogs by direct contact or breathing in infected particles. The virus is then carried around the body via the blood and multiplies in particular body tissues. Symptoms of the disease relate to these areas.

Initial signs of distemper include pyrexia (raised body), depression, nasal discharge, conjunctivitis, coughing, vomiting and diarrhoea. The name hard pad developed due to the abnormal thickening and cracks that can (but not always) occur in the pads of the feet.

After a few weeks, many dogs go on to develop nervous signs, or seizures and paralysis. The early stages of distemper can be fatal and if survived, then long term neurological signs can result in euthanasia. It is not possible to treat the virus itself, but other treatment and nursing are vital. If your dog or puppy shows any of these symptoms, you should arrange for Parkside to examine your dog and start any necessary treatment.

If your dog has the disease, early supportive treatment may allow it to make a full recovery, but 80% of dogs do not survive, which is why you must vaccinate. Your dog will need an initial course of usually two vaccinations, followed by an annual booster.