



## **Canine Parvovirus infection**

### **(Catflu)**

Canine Parvovirus, or Catflu, as it is more commonly referred to, is a serious and life threatening viral infection of young **unvaccinated dogs**. The virus is often found in contaminated environments especially where a large amount of dogs are been housed eg: kennels or dog breeding establishments. Cats do not transmit the virus nor are they affected by the canine parvo-virus!

The virus is picked up by a young dog as it comes into contact with other infected dog faeces or an environment that may have been contaminated by another sick dog. The virus enters via the oral or nasal cavity but eventually moves down to the intestine where it replicated and causes the intestinal cells to die and fall off exposing the more sensitive intestinal blood vessels that are found deeper under the cell layers.

Symptoms of the disease include the following:

- Lack of appetite and listlessness
- Vomition
- Diarrhoea which may contain blood

If any of these symptoms are noted in your young dog they need to be presented to your veterinarian as soon as possible for testing.

During a consultation the vet will do a full clinical exam and perform some tests on the stool sample he/her obtained from the sick dog. From these tests a possible diagnosis of catflu may be made.

Due to the severity of the infections, treatments for these patients are needed as soon as possible, which may include intravenous fluid therapy, force feeding, antibiotics, nausea control and constant TLC. Some patients may even need blood plasma transfusions due to the severe loss of proteins and blood through the damaged intestines.

With the correct treatments the affected patient has the best chance of survival, but sometimes they do pass away due to the viral infections and their secondary complications. There are good vaccines available which help to protect against the catflu virus and these can be started at 6 weeks of age, patients need several boosters of these vaccinations to have some form of immunity. Sometimes puppies can contract the virus, even though all vaccinations are up to date, as there are several new strains of the virus immerring.

So, to keep your little puppy happy and healthy, make sure that they are vaccinated by a veterinarian according to the recommended vaccination schedule, as soon as possible, if any of the above symptoms are noted in your dog at any time, they should always be presented to your vet for a health check-up.