

Distemper

Niles Animal Hospital and Bird Medical Center
7278 N. Milwaukee Ave. Niles, IL 60714
(847)-647-9325 FAX (847)-647-8498
www.nilesanimalhospital.com

Overview

Canine distemper is a highly contagious disease caused by canine distemper virus (CDV). It may affect the respiratory, gastrointestinal and neurologic systems and is generally transmitted through contact with mucous and watery secretions discharged from the eyes and noses of infected dogs. However, it can also be transmitted by contact with urine and other bodily fluids, so your dog may become infected without coming into contact with an infected dog. Air currents and inanimate objects can also carry the virus.

Distemper was a common infection in dogs many years ago, but the incidence has been significantly decreased through widespread vaccination. Canine distemper is now most commonly seen in young, unvaccinated or immune-compromised dogs. More than 50 percent of dogs that contract the disease die from it. Even if a dog doesn't die, canine distemper can cause irreparable damage to the nervous system, leaving the dog with partial or total paralysis, seizures or persistent tics.

Diagnosis and Treatment Notes:

- Distemper can be difficult to diagnose. A thorough history, physical examination, bloodwork, chest x-rays, evaluation of cells from the underside of the eyelid and cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) taps may be performed. The measurement of distemper antibody titers in the blood may also be recommended.
- Treatment depends on the severity of the disease, your individual pet, and your veterinarian. Pets with distemper are treated with supportive care since there is no treatment that kills the virus. Affected dogs may receive fluids, antibiotics, seizure control medication, and medication to alleviate the various symptoms that develop. Discuss treatment details when your pet is diagnosed with this condition.

What to Watch for*:

- Vomiting
- Poor appetite
- Lethargy

- Diarrhea
- Depression
- Seizures
- Involuntary muscle tremors or tics

** Please notify us if you notice any of the above signs or if you have any questions!*