

## Common Illnesses in Dogs By Best Friends Animal Society

The following information is intended to help you better understand and recognize some of the more common illnesses in dogs.

### Canine Distemper

Canine distemper is a viral disease that is often fatal. Distemper is most commonly seen in puppies 3-6 months old. Early signs resemble a severe cold. The vaccine for canine distemper is considered very effective.

**Signs & Symptoms:** Eye congestion and discharge, loss of appetite, vomiting, weight loss, nasal discharge, and diarrhea

**Treatment:** Veterinary care including fluid therapy and antibiotics

**Transmission:** Very contagious

### Parvovirus

Parvo is a disease that is most common in puppies and young dogs. It causes the sloughing of the lining of the intestinal tract. Parvovirus can survive in the environment for six months or longer. This means that other unvaccinated dogs can become infected with parvo simply by coming into contact with places where an infected dog has been. A bleach solution is the best way to disinfect areas that may have been contaminated. The vaccine for parvovirus is considered very effective.

**Signs & Symptoms:** Lethargy, loss of appetite, vomiting, and diarrhea (usually bloody)

**Treatment:** Veterinary care, including fluid therapy and antibiotics

**Transmission:** Very contagious to other dogs, especially through contact with infected feces or vomit

### “Kennel Cough”

Kennel cough is a respiratory tract infection that has been linked to several different viral and bacterial causes. Coughing is usually stimulated by physical exertion or by touching the throat area. Kennel cough is self-limiting, usually lasting 1-3 weeks. Antibiotics are often given to prevent secondary infections. Kennel cough is very common in shelters and other boarding facilities. There is a vaccine for bordetella, one of the main agents responsible for causing kennel cough.

**Signs & Symptoms:** Cough, runny nose and eyes

**Treatment:** Veterinary care, including antibiotics and cough suppressants

**Transmission:** Very contagious to other dogs

### Ear Mites

Ear mites are tiny parasites that live in the ear canal.

**Signs & Symptoms:** Itching, scratching, head shaking, dark brown discharge in the ears

**Treatment:** Veterinary care, including an injection or ear drops

**Transmission:** Contagious to other dogs and cats, but usually requires direct contact with the infected animal

### Ringworm

Ringworm is a fungus related to athlete's foot; it's not actually a worm.

**Signs & Symptoms:** Irregularly shaped areas of fur loss; the skin of the areas will usually appear rough and scaly

**Treatment:** Veterinary care, including an injection and/or topical treatment

**Transmission:** Very contagious to other dogs, cats and people, but usually requires direct contact with the infected animal

### Fleas

Fleas are tiny insects that feed on the blood of dogs, cats, humans and other animals. Although each flea only consumes a small drop of blood, fleas usually attack in large numbers.

**Signs & Symptoms:** Intense itching and scratching

**Treatment:** Veterinary care, including an injection and/or topical treatment

**Transmission:** Very contagious to other dogs, cats and people

### Round, Tape, and Hook Worms

Worms affect a dog's digestive system. They are most commonly seen in puppies and young dogs.

**Signs & Symptoms:** Large belly, diarrhea, and an inability to gain weight

**Treatment:** Veterinary care, including de-worming medication

**Transmission:** Contagious to other dogs and cats, but only through contact with (and subsequent ingestion of) feces