



Canine Parvovirus

Over the past few weeks several cases of the highly infectious, and often fatal, dog disease Canine Parvovirus, have been seen in Blenheim. This is a heart-breaking disease and affected animals need very intensive treatment which can be expensive to treat with no guarantee of success.

Parvovirus in dogs is a killer – The clinical symptoms often present in a sudden-onset of profuse, smelly, bloody diarrhoea and vomiting. (Occasionally a pup may just seem quiet as the first symptom). This can lead to severe dehydration and rapid death (within 24–48 hours), especially in unvaccinated pups and young dogs.

In the majority of cases, a dog that contracts parvovirus will die. If diagnosed early enough, treatment may involve intensive care for several days in the veterinary hospital and can be costly with no guarantee of survival; however the earlier it is diagnosed the more chance of a successful treatment outcome.

Veterinarians use an in clinic test which can quickly identify Parvovirus. In unvaccinated pups this disease can be devastating, as the infection can very quickly spread through an entire litter.

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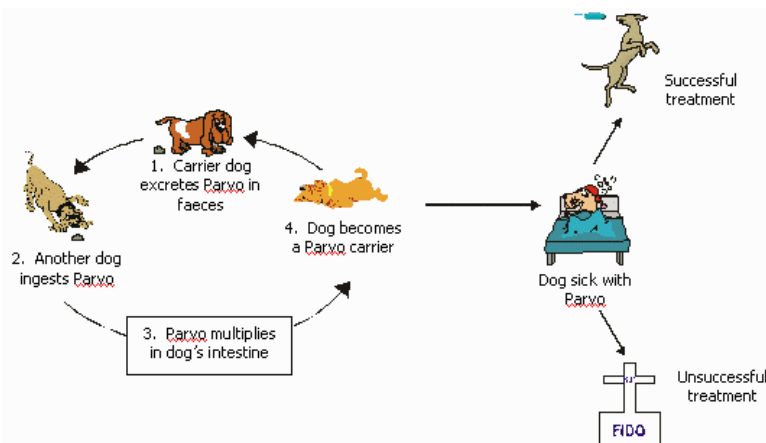
Despite the deadly nature of parvovirus, there are still thousands of dogs in New Zealand who remain unvaccinated and continue to spread this highly contagious virus. Outbreaks are regularly reported, affecting both urban and rural dogs.

Dogs infected with parvovirus shed millions of virus particles in their faeces for up to three weeks. The virus can then be spread from one dog to another through exposure to contaminated faeces. Parvovirus is very resistant, can survive freezing temperatures and most household disinfectants will not kill it. This virus can also be spread on shoes and clothing, meaning that any dog, person or vehicle entering your property may be a source of infection.

This severe disease can be prevented with vaccinations. Vets On Alabama use the Nobivac® range of vaccines which provide world-leading protection against parvovirus. These vaccines contain a patented strain of parvovirus called C154 which delivers proven cross-protection against all types of known canine parvovirus.

Vaccination is the **ONLY** way to prevent canine parvovirus

For more information on canine parvovirus or to book your dog/s in for a vaccination please contact the clinic.



What Is Your Cats' Tail Saying?

The cat's tail has a very important function in contributing to the cat's sense of balance – serving as a natural counterweight for walking on narrow fences or branches and abrupt turns at high speed but it is also a very effective communication tool. Its position can give you an insight into your cat's mood if you pay close attention, offering many clues to a cat's frame of mind, however you should also take into consideration any other body signals and the immediate environment. Learning more about animal body language and signals can go a long way to strengthen bonds and increase levels of trust and security with your pet.

Upright Tail

A tail held in an upright position is typically displaying a feeling of confidence and content in the immediate surroundings. If your cat is walking toward you and you notice she also gives a little flick with the tip of her upright tail, consider that a friendly greeting.



Upright Curved Tip

An upright tail that has a little hook or curve at the top is an even stronger indication of a desire to interact as the cat approaches. You may also see a slight flick of the tail.

Quivering

This is a sign of spray-marking, when a cat will back up to an object and their upright tail will begin to quiver, followed by a spray of urine. The body posture will include treading with the front paws, and they will usually have half-closed or closed eyes. This tail position can also occur without depositing urine, usually seen when a cat is anticipating something positive. You will notice the difference as the cat's eyes will remain open, and are usually focused on the source of the anticipation.



Slightly Horizontal - Relaxed

A tail held in a slightly horizontal position as they walk through their territory usually indicates relaxation but it's important to take all signals into consideration. A truly relaxed cat will also have a relaxed body posture and the tail will not appear stiff.

Low Horizontal

A tail held low or as the cat walks or stands can indicate an uncertain cat. This tail position can precede aggression if you attempt to approach or interact. You may see this in a cat who is trying to avoid being noticed or is feeling fearful; the body will be positioned lower to the ground as well.



Tucked Under Tail

If a cat's tail is between the legs or tucked under the body, it is very fearful and feeling threatened.

Tail Tucked Around Body

Sometimes cats will wrap their tail close and around their paws when sitting or napping. This can display a relaxed cat that would prefer not to interact, or that is feeling a little unsure. Other body signals will indicate whether she is nervous (twitchy tail tip, lowered body posture) or just relaxed (eyes half closed or closed).



Fluffy Tail

Cats try to puff themselves up to make themselves look bigger when under threat so this indicates your cat is afraid and feels threatened. The tail will resemble a bottle brush.



Arched Tail

When arched, the tail will also be puffed up, indicating a direct threat and preparation for battle. This can be either in defensive or offensive. The back will also be arched and the legs stiff and held straight to maximize size. You will see this in young kittens playing and learning to interact which show all the posturing, but without the aggression.

Twitching Tail

This is often seen when the cat is watching prey or about to pounce, indicating excitement and anticipation. It may initially start as a little swish and then accelerate into outright twitching.



Lashing Tail

Slow or fast, this is an indication of irritation when a cat is frustrated or over stimulated. It may look like a dog wagging its tail but the signals between the two species mean two very different things. This is a sign to back off immediately.

DENTAL CHECKS

Does your pet have bad breath?

One of the first signs of periodontal disease is bad breath, caused by bacteria which can lead to plaque build up and tartar resulting in inflamed gums that may bleed, oral ulcerations, tooth mobility and loss, receding gums and pain. Your pet may also experience other symptoms like dribbling, decreased appetite, food falling out of their mouth while eating, reluctance to groom, head shaking and other changes in behavior. Treats and chews aren't always enough to prevent dental problems!

Vets on Alabama offer a free dental check for your dog or cat. This check-up is done by one of our highly skilled veterinary nurses

- Thorough mouth exam
- Detailed advice on dental home care
- Rundown of dental products available
- Estimates + info on dental surgeries given (if necessary)

Call the Clinic to Book Your Cat or Dog In For Their Free Dental Check

Did you know 70% of pets over the age of 2 have dental disease? It is preventable!



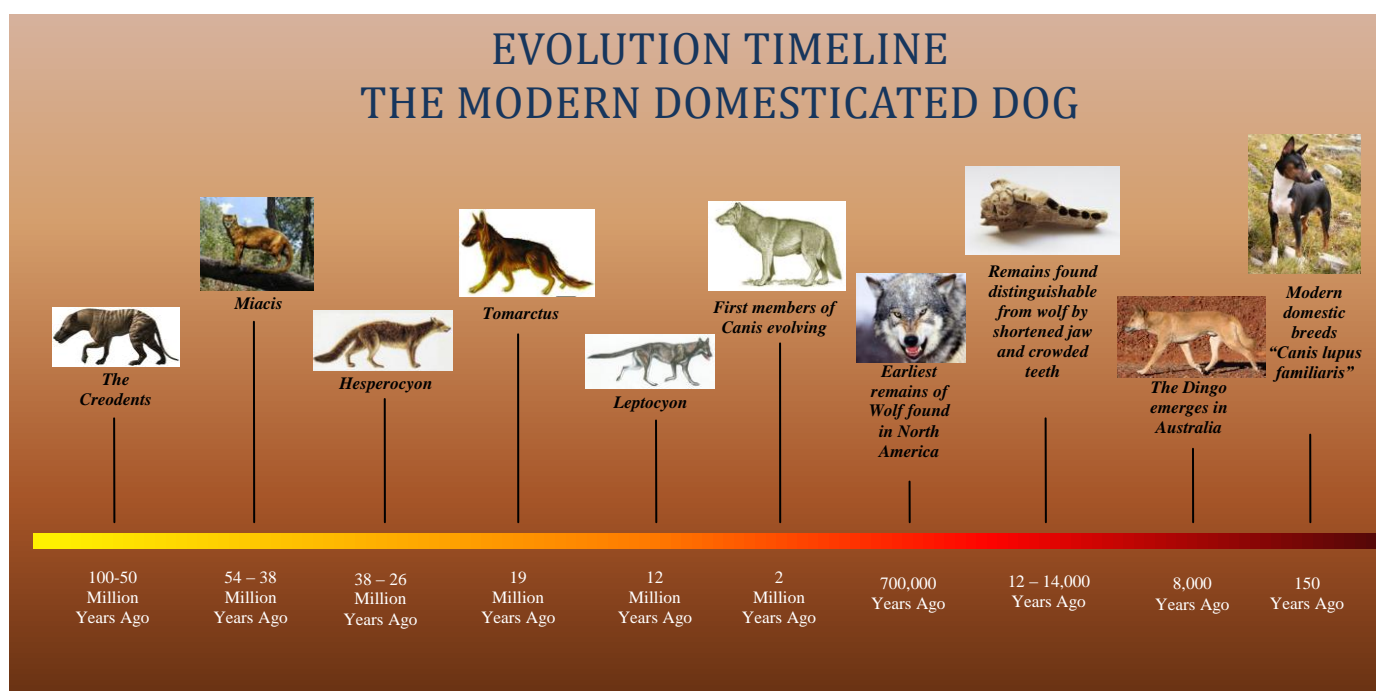
Evolution of the Dog

The domestic dog as we know it has only been in existence for around 150 years and though it is widely accepted that modern dogs evolved from wolves, its evolution over millions of years involved many prehistoric carnivores which resemble little of the modern day canine. They developed from a line of carnivorous mammals called “Canids”, named so after the shape of their teeth. It was the changing shape of their teeth and mouth that would produce the first evidence that Wolves began to evolve into dogs with the discovery of a jawbone and teeth found in Eastern Asia around 12 – 14,000 years ago; distinguishable from the wolf by a short jaw and crowded teeth.

A family of meat eating mammals called *Miacis* evolved with the tooth shape (4 carnassial teeth) around 54-38 million years ago. The following 25 million years saw an explosion of herbivores due to an expanding range of vegetation which was mirrored by an explosion of carnivores. The first to have the modern inner-ear characteristic of the canine family was a species named *Hesperocyon*. It is a well represented mammal with numerous fossils having been found from prehistoric North America and generally considered directly ancestral to all later canids. This developed into a huge range of families from which *Canis davisii* evolved 10 million years ago, migrating throughout Asia, Europe and Africa, gradually morphing over the next 8 million years into the ancestors of today’s canines, eventually returning to North America from whence it originated.

Approximately 19 million years ago saw *Tomarctus* evolve, which was originally considered to be an ancestor of the dog, but has been questioned through recent research. (Fogle, 2007). By 12 million years ago 42 different genera of dog like canines had emerged. From these, *Leptocyon* is now considered to be the first true canine, although small in stature. The passing of approximately another 10 million years saw the foundation stock for modern carnivores evolve into 10 main groups, the largest “Canis”, of which Wolves, Jackals, Coyotes and Dogs are members, the 2nd largest the “Vulpes” group consisting of 12 species of Fox, and the other groups including the African wild dog, Dhole, Maned wolf, Bush dog and Raccoon dog.

Essentially evolving to habitat and climate changes around two million years ago when tropical forest gave way to open savannah, ancestral canines that may have once been solitary hunters developed social relationships needed for hunting in packs, ensuring they could bring down bigger, faster prey which were also evolving to the changing world. It would seem this ability to form crucial social relationships quite likely solidified the dogs’ success as a species, and is still predominate in the canine as we know it today.



Do Animals Grieve?



There's plenty of anecdotal evidence to suggest that animals experience grief. In July, the emotions in many were stirred when video of an adult bottlenose dolphin was captured off the western coast of Italy, seemingly trying to revive the body of a dead dolphin calf. The calf's mother repeatedly nudged the young dolphin's inanimate body. Similar behavior was seen in 2013, when an adult dolphin was observed carrying the body of a dead calf out to sea. Dolphins are not the only animals that appear to mourn their loved ones. In Barbara J King's book 'How Animal Grieve', she cites numerous cases of a wide range of species including

cetaceans, great apes, elephants, farm animals and domestic pets that have acted in ways similar to humans when we grieve. But the debate about whether animals, including man's best friend, experiences emotions such as grief, depression and happiness has raged for years. In fact, just a couple of centuries ago, many scientists and philosophers believed dogs were simply dumb animals incapable of thought – let alone any levels of emotionality. French philosopher René Descartes suggested dogs had no intelligence, reasoning or consciousness, they were instead controlled by physical reflexes and unthinking responses to things that stimulate them. This thinking was challenged by Charles Darwin in 1859 with the publication of 'The Origin of Species'. Darwin concluded animals and people just have differing levels of awareness, reasoning ability, intelligence and memory.

While some may argue that complex emotions such as love or grief is simply being anthropomorphic, brain-imaging techniques have shown that humans form emotions in the primitive parts of the brain, such as the limbic system, and that's something we share with all mammals including Fido. The same neurotransmitter chemicals, such as dopamine and other endorphins, are also identical across different species. So, one has to ask – if humans share the same anatomy, physiology and biochemistry as our four-legged friends, why wouldn't they experience similar feelings? In 2012, scientists at the Cambridge Declaration on Consciousness in Non-Human Animals, agreed that animals experience moment-to-moment consciousness, just like humans, the key difference is that humans use their frontal cortex to plan, think and reflect. Marc Bekoff from University of Colorado is also in agreement, he says: "Many animals feel 'love' as well as 'grief', even these concepts are hard to define precisely." Bekoff continues: "We humans do not fully understand love, but we do not deny its existence – or its power to shape our emotional responses."



Helping Pets Adjust:

1. If possible, allow your surviving pet access to see and smell the deceased animal. If this isn't possible, then enable them to sniff, for example, the collar your pet was wearing or the blanket it was laying on. This may help them understand what has happened.
2. Stick to your 'normal' routine. The loss of a four-legged friend is a huge change for the surviving pet, so it is important to keep to your typical routine as much as possible, such as feeding and walking times.
3. Keep your pet's mind and body active. Exploring new environments while out on a walk and playing with your dog will not only promote the secretion of 'happy hormones' but it will also help blow the cobwebs away for you too.
4. Avoid unwittingly reinforcing any unwanted behaviour. Some dogs may, for example, become more vocal and whine, stop eating or follow you around the house. Avoid making a big fuss about this; instead focus on reinforcing good behaviour. You can redirect your pets attention by keeping them busy with food puzzle toys, hide and seek games and so on.
5. Highly social dogs may enjoy having a new companion. If your pet is very sociable and seemingly enjoys the company of others, then you may want to consider getting another pet. However, take a common sense approach: consider your home situation – ask yourself how much time you have to invest in training a new pet and the additional costs; consider the personalities of your surviving pet[s] so you can make an informed decision on the 'best-match' for your household; and ensure introductions plus interactions are well-managed. After all, there is no such thing as an 'instant friend'.

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