

## **CANINE DISTEMPER VIRUS (CDV)**

**What is CDV and how common is it?** CDV is a common disease in Hong Kong particularly in unvaccinated puppies from unvaccinated mothers. It is caused by a virus which is shed in bodily secretions but especially from the respiratory tract. Unvaccinated dogs of any age are susceptible to CDV but particularly puppies 2-6 months old.

**What are the signs of CDV?** Early symptoms of the disease occur 3-6 days after initial infection. These mild symptoms may go unnoticed and include fever, mild conjunctivitis and loss of appetite. 6-14 days after infection symptoms worsen showing respiratory and gastrointestinal signs which may be complicated by secondary bacterial infections:-

- **Respiratory:** Sneezing and a clear nasal discharge which becomes thick and yellow; runny eyes. Soft moist cough which can progress to pneumonia
- **Gastrointestinal:** Vomiting and diarrhoea which quickly causes dehydration and electrolyte imbalances. These symptoms may then be followed by more serious neurological signs - fits or seizures, twitching, shaking, trembling and “chewing-gum fits”. They often occur later in life and even into old age. Sadly, they are very difficult to control - vets often recommend that these dogs should be humanely destroyed. Some dogs may also develop erosions in their teeth (enamel hypoplasia) or hardness of their foot pads or nose (hyperkeratosis).

**How is it diagnosed?** As the symptoms of CDV are highly characteristic of the virus, vets can often make a diagnosis after examining your dog. Your vet may also perform a CDV antigen test. Blood tests and x-rays may be used to help in the diagnosis, although these are not normally necessary.

**How is it treated?** As CDV is viral there is no cure for the disease, consequently the best treatment is nursing. You should provide a clean, warm and draught free environment for your puppy. Any discharge from the nose and eyes should be gently bathed as necessary with warm salty water. Vapourization and humidification are important so when having a hot shower take the puppy with you into the bathroom (away from the water). The steam will help to soothe the airways. Adding eucalyptus oil or “Vicks Vaporub” into a mug of hot water in the shower can also help with the congestion in your dog’s lungs.

Maintaining hydration and energy is important too. Your vet may prescribe an oral rehydration powder which should be mixed with water as directed. This can be syringe fed every 2 hours after warming to body temperature. Your vet may prescribe a convalescence diet such as Hill a/d or Waltham Concentration diet, which can also be warmed and syringe fed.

Your vet may prescribe antibiotics to combat any secondary infection or anti-diarrhoeals/ anti-emetics to decrease diarrhoea and vomiting. It is VERY important to follow all instructions carefully and never to overdose. Please finish the course of any medication given and attend check-up appointments as recommended.

Isolation from other dogs is vital to prevent the spread of disease. Any unvaccinated (but healthy) dogs in the household should be vaccinated as soon as possible. Cats and humans can’t catch CDV.

**Prognosis:** The prognosis depends on the strain of CDV and your dog’s immune system. Half of all dogs infected with CDV will die due to dehydration or neurological symptoms. This figure is much higher in puppies and up to 80% may die despite treatment. Also, as discussed earlier, some effects of CDV such as hard-pad, fits and enamel hypoplasia, may persist for many years after the initial infection. Dogs that recover will shed the virus for several weeks after the infection but do not continue to shed the virus for life.

**How to prevent?** CDV is easily prevented by proper vaccination. This means two or three vaccinations during puppy-hood starting at 6 or 8 weeks old with the final vaccine at 12 weeks or older. At the SPCA we recommend that your puppy be vaccinated at 8 weeks and 12 weeks of age with yearly boosters after the primary course. Finally, if you have lost a dog due to distemper you should wait 1 month before introducing a new dog into your household as the virus can survive in the environment for a short time. You should also clean their living quarters with a 1:49 solution of bleach.

**PLEASE PROTECT YOUR COMPANION FROM THIS SERIOUS  
VIRUS BY VACCINATING YOUR DOG EVERY YEAR**

## 狗瘟

### 什麼是狗瘟?

狗瘟是一種由病毒 CDV 引起的致命傳染病。狗瘟在香港很常見，尤其是未接受任何疫苗注射的幼犬。這病毒透過染病狗隻的分泌物，例如：口水及鼻水傳播開去。任何年齡的狗隻都有機會被感染，但 2-6 個月大的幼犬較易受感染。

### 臨床病徵

早期病徵通常在被感染後 3-6 日出現。輕微病徵包括食慾不振，眼分泌物增多及發燒。病情之後可繼續惡化，呼吸、消化及神經系統會被影響。病徵包括打噴嚏、流鼻水(透明或黃綠色)、流眼水、痰多咳嗽及肺炎。嘔吐、腹瀉可導致缺水及電解質失衡。肌肉抽搐及抽筋。有些狗的牙齒表面琺瑯質會被破壞變得不平滑。爪墊及鼻子亦可能硬化。

### 斷症

由於狗瘟的病徵很特別，好多時獸醫單憑簡單的身體檢查已可斷症了。但有時亦需作病毒測試、驗血及照 X 光等。

### 治療方法

由於狗瘟是由病毒引致，所以是無藥可醫的，只可以依賴狗隻本身的免疫力去對抗病毒。我們可做的主要是護理：

- 為犬隻提供一個清潔及溫暖的休息環境
- 用棉花及暖水清潔眼及鼻的分泌物
- 在我們洗澡時把犬隻同放浴室內或加一些薄荷膏到熱水中，使他們吸到蒸氣，以減輕鼻塞
- 由於嘔吐及腹瀉可導致缺水及電解質失衡關係，獸醫可能會處方 **Glucolytes** 或 **Rehydration Support**，這可加水及加熱後每 2 小時用針筒餵服
- 若食慾不振，我們可將食物加熱一點，使之香味更濃。亦可以餵牠們喝葡萄糖水或吃高營養液體狀糧食，例如 **Hill's a/d** 或 **Royal Canin Recovery food**
- 獸醫可能處方抗生素去幫助犬隻對抗其他細菌，減低第二感染。如有需要的話亦會處方止嘔及止瀉藥
- 請緊記要跟足指示餵藥及按時覆診
- 防止病毒散播最有效的方法是隔離。其他所有未接受防疫注射的健康狗隻亦應盡快接受疫苗。貓隻及人類並不會受感染的

雖然護理會有幫助，但狗隻染上狗瘟後的死亡率可超個 50%，幼犬的死亡率更可達 80%。很多康復的狗隻亦會變成長期病患(例如肺部受損)，牙齒琺瑯質被破壞及爪墊硬化等將維持一生。

### 預防方法

定期注射疫苗可以有效防止狗瘟。幼犬視乎年齡需接受 2-3 次疫苗。香港愛護動物協會建議幼犬在 6 星期大接受 DP 疫苗，然後在 8 星期大接受 DHPPi+L 疫苗直至 12 星期大以後，之後每年一次。

最後如你家裏最近有狗隻因狗瘟而死亡的話，最少要等一個月才可再養新狗，與此同時要以 1:49 漂白水徹底清潔環境。

為保障你狗兒的健康，請每年為牠們注射疫苗