Top Five Deadly Canine Diseases

Know the Signs and Symptoms

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Caring for your pet dog naturally includes not just simply providing food and shelter, but more importantly giving priority to maintaining health and well being.

This means having an extensive knowledge on what are the most common ailments that can possibly snuff out the life of your adorable pooch unceremoniously. This is but part and parcel on the responsibility you have taken on in adopting a dog and welcoming him as a member of the household.

Although dogs have been known to be exuberant, feisty and resilient in nature, they too fall prey to some of to deadly diseases. As a dependable and concerned pet owner, it is vital that you are able to adeptly evaluate your pet’s health and detect some signs and symptoms that can possibly lead to one of canine’s most dreaded diseases.

Similar to human beings, your pet’s welfare will greatly rely on early detection and timely action. With sufficient knowledge, you might be able to see your pet’s illness with a more educated eye rather than haplessly assuming your one spirited dog is just having a not-so good day.

So here is the list of the 5 most common and highly dangerous illnesses in the world or canines. By properly pinpointing telltale symptoms, you can effectively prolong the life of your pet and build a more harmonious and healthy family life, all with your precious pet in tow.
Canine Distemper

This is considered to be the mostfatal viral diseases all over the world. Statistics show that there is approximately 90% probability of death for dogs diagnosed with canine distemper and 50% chances of non-immunized and non-vaccinated dogs to contract this highly dreaded disease.

More often than not, puppies three months and below are more at risk. Clinical signs of anorexia, depression, and vomiting and bloody diarrhea along with respiratory distress are among the initial symptoms of canine distemper.

Dogs are known to suffer extreme difficulty in breathing; inflammation of eye and nose tissues and mucopurulent oculonasal discharges may be present in certain cases.

Transmission – canine distemper is primarily transmitted through airborne viral particles that canines breathe in. However, there have been reported cases of human contracting the said virus or what is clinically known as CDV infection. The good news is people that are immunized with measles as also well protected against this disease.

Symptoms - gastrointestinal and respiratory symptoms such as:

- Conjunctivitis
- Diarrhea
- Fever
- Pneumonia
- Rhinitis
- Vomiting
- Paralysis
- Seizures
Progressive deterioration of mental abilities

*Treatment* – there is no known cure for canine distemper, although one can offer supportive treatment that includes providing a warm environment, keeping eyes and noses free from any discharges, provide medications for diarrhea and antibiotics for pneumonia.

*Preventive Measures* – vaccination is still the best prevention for canine distemper since it is known to work even if the animal is exposed to the virus provided it is efficiently administered within 4 days. To effectively ensure long-lasting immunity, dogs should be provided annual vaccinations.
Canine Para Influenza

This type of disease is considered to be one of the highly contagious respiratory canine illnesses and largely contributes to the possibility of contracting upper respiratory diseases and infectious tracheobronchitis.

More often than not, environmental factors come into play and increases to possibility of development. Drafts and high humidity are known to enhance acute susceptibility to canine para influenza. The great news is this medical condition is self-eliminating and generally only lasts from 5 –10 days.

**Transmission** – canine para influenza can rapidly spread through aerosolized respiratory secretions and other contaminated inanimate materials and even human beings who are frequently moving from an infected to uninfected dog.

The incubation period usually has duration of two to five days and clinical symptoms may only appear after 10 days. All breeds of dog can highly susceptible to this pathogen with 80% possibility on development of disease after exposure.

**Symptoms** – this particular disease mimics kennel coughing symptoms, thus in some cases the virus are often mistaken as such.

- 10-21 days of coughing despite antibiotic treatments
- Purulent nasal discharges
- Low-grade fever
- Pneumonia
- Increased Respiratory Effort and Rate
- Possible consolidation of lung lobes
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**Treatment** – as majority of the viral infections, treatment is largely considered as supportive. Proper nutrition and providing a clean environment considerably help dogs kick up their immune system in response to the virus. A broad-spectrum bacterial antimicrobial prescription can help relieve nasal discharges along with hydration through intravenous fluids.

**Prevention and Control** – although no vaccine has been introduced to ward of canine para influenza, dog owners can adeptly prevent the infliction of such diseases by taking insecurity precautions.

his virus can be easily eliminated with commercial disinfectants such as quaternary ammonium compounds and even bleach solutions. Regular cleaning and disinfecting of canine cages as well as food bowls can significantly help in effectively preventing canine para influenza.
Infectious Canine Hepatitis

Canine hepatitis is a liver condition that can also affect other major internal organs caused by canine adenovirus type 1.

This particular virus is can actually be found worldwide. Unvaccinated dogs are more at risk with contracting infectious canine hepatitis and are known to be more prevalent with puppies less than one year of age.

Transmission – the said virus can be easily transmitted through nasal discharges and dog urine, and requires direct contact with another infected dog. Among the most common sources of transmission are the contaminated cages, runs, dishes, and collars.

Symptoms – the primary target of the virus are the tonsils and the larynx that causes sore throats, mild coughing, and pneumonia. As the virus enters the bloodstream, more prominent symptoms can be noticed such as cloudy cornea or what is more commonly known as hepatitis blue eyes. In severe cases, the liver and kidneys start to fail, dogs experience seizures and vomiting along with diarrhea and extreme thirst.

Treatment and Prevention – like other aforementioned canine diseases, there are actually no specific treatments for canine hepatitis, and only intravenous fluids and supportive treatment are recommended.

However, the availability of vaccines that contain adenovirus type 1 to provide puppies and adult dogs with immunity to effectively ward off diseases. There are modern vaccines, such as CAV-1 or CAV-2 available today can cross protects canines from hepatitis and cough. This canine disease is more common in Asian countries than in the United States, with only 4 rabies-related deaths recorded since 1994.
Rabies

Of all the introduced canine diseases, one of the most feared is the rabies as this virus attacks the brain of the dog and is known to be highly fatal. This disease can also be transmitted to humans and other animals.

The mere mention of rabies often bring out pictures of uncontrollable dogs that are known to bite anyone within sight along with the telltale foaming on the mouth.

**Transmission** – the tricky thing about rabies is that not only canines are susceptible to this virus, human beings are also at risk especially those who closely work with wildlife and even veterinarians. However, a vaccine can provide sufficient protection to both canines and human beings who are more known to be at a higher risk of exposure.

Transmission can only be achieved though bites made by an infected animal to a non-infected. However, the remains of a carcass of an infected animal have been known carry the virus within 24 hours and are known to have high virus levels in the saliva.

**Symptoms** - after contact with virus, the dog goes through several stages. There are some reported cases of bitten dogs that have shown any symptoms but can possibly be a lifelong carrier. The incubation period is between three to eight weeks and shows the following symptoms:

- Apprehension and anxiety
- Fever
- Irritability and erratic behavior
- Labored breathing
- Respiratory failure
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**Treatment** – there are no known treatment for rabies and if the virus has reached severe stages, death is imminent even in humans. However post exposure treatment would include one shot of rabies immunoglobulin and five doses of rabies vaccines.

The immunoglobulin should be administered should be administered within 24-48 hours from exposure and 5 rabies boosters shots are needed to stimulate production of antibodies to protect the body from the virus, or what is known as maintaining active immunity.

**Prevention** – vaccination is still the best-known preventive measure for rabies. In the United States, rabies vaccination are mandatory in all states, however, there are only an estimated 50% of the canine population with rabies vaccines.
Canine Parvovirus

This is a highly contagious viral disease that afflicts dogs of all ages, but is known to be especially deadly in puppies since it often leads to death within 48-72 hours of exposure.

This particular virus can also withstand temperature changes and even treatment disinfectants and can even persist in some areas for several months. However, this virus are only contagious to dogs but not to other animals and human beings.

Transmission – this particular virus if often transferred through direct contact of a healthy dog to an infected year. Unlike rabies virus that has high concentration in the saliva, parvovirus is usually found in the stool.

This poses a very real threat since dogs are known to sniff other dog’s eliminated, which makes fecal-oral transmission among the highly prevalent mode of transmission. Indirect transmission can also be possible with virus particles easily transferred through in hands, clothing and other inanimate objects.

Symptoms –there have been some are cases where dogs may have parvovirus but doesn’t outwardly show sign of telltale symptoms on the onset. However, after some time, more often that not dogs are known to display noticeable and alarming symptoms such as:

- Difficulty in breathing
- Extreme depression, unwillingness to nurse
- Irregular heartbeat
- Vomiting
- Loss of Appetite
- Diarrhea
Treatment – the primary key in the treatment of parvovirus is maintaining, as much as possible the natural body composition at the same time preventing bacterial infection. Since this is essentially a virus, there is no cure. However, in the early stages fluid therapy would be the most important factor in treating infected dogs.

Since the canine body is roughly about 80% water, it would be impossible to leave with 12-15% loss of the normal body due to diarrhea. Intravenous fluids would be the most viable course to rehydrate the body and at the same time provide nourishment.

Other treatments to complement fluid therapy would include hospitalization of pet although this does not guarantee survival. Only 70% of hospitalized cases have survived parvovirus and may usually require a full week of treatment.

Prevention – proper sanitation is the best preventive measure for the much dreaded parvovirus although is can be extremely difficult mainly because the virus is resistant and easily spreads.

Owners should also minimized their pet’s contact with other pet’s stool as much as possible as well as full series of vaccination and boosters all through intervals to protect dogs from this highly dangerous virus.