



CANINE DISTEMPER

City of Los Angeles ☐ L. A. Animal Services

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Definition

Canine distemper is a contagious, febrile and often fatal viral disease with respiratory, gastrointestinal, and central nervous system manifestations.

Route of infection

The natural route of infection is by airborne and droplet exposure.

Systems affected:

Respiratory, alimentary, urogenital, nervous

Symptoms

- The first symptoms may be coughing, similar to that observed with treatable kennel cough.
- Ocular and/or nasal discharge.
- Spasmodic twitching of the eyelids, sensitivity to light
- Vomiting, diarrhea
- Seizures
- Spasm or twitching of a muscle or group of muscles
- Partial or complete paralysis
- Hardening of foot pads and nose (hyperkeratosis).
- In growing dogs, the enamel of teeth may be damaged.

Differential Diagnosis

- Kennel cough can mimic the respiratory symptoms of canine distemper.
- Vomiting and diarrhea should be differentiated from canine parvovirus, corona virus infections, bacterial and internal parasite infections, etc.
- The neurological symptoms must be differentiated from other infections, trauma and ingestion of toxins, etc.

Diagnosis

Consult your private veterinarian if your new puppy or dog develops any symptoms. Medical history and clinical examination by your private veterinarian will play a large part in the diagnosis of this disease. He or she may recommend laboratory tests and radiographs to aid in making the diagnosis.

This sheet is for general information only. It is not intended to provide individual veterinary advice or diagnosis. Consult your private veterinarian for examination, diagnostics, and treatment recommendations for your companion animal's health and behavior. Acting on any information that is provided here, without first consulting your private veterinarian, is solely at the reader's risk. Members of the Southern California Veterinary Medical Association offer free examinations of shelter animals within the first 3 days of adoption. This does not include diagnostics or treatment.