



Canine Distemper Virus

- Canine Distemper (CD) is a highly contagious infectious disease of dogs worldwide caused by the canine distemper virus (CDV). It is often fatal.
- CD is a multisystemic disease that can present with one or more of the following:
 - Respiratory disease with severe pneumonia
 - Gastrointestinal disease with vomiting and diarrhoea
 - Neurological disease including seizures
 - Severe immunosuppression causing the dog to become infected by normally innocuous bacteria and viruses
- The most common source of infection is direct contact between the susceptible dog and infected dogs or wildlife.
- CD and canine parvovirus remain the two most important infectious diseases of dogs. CD is an important cause of death for dogs in areas where vaccination is limited (e.g. <40% of the dog population.)
- CDV vaccines are excellent as they provide prolonged immunity in a high percentage of dogs that receive one dose of MLV vaccine at or after 16 weeks of age. Efficacy of CDV vaccines approaches 99% and dogs develop protective immunity within a few days after vaccination.
- Ideally every dog should receive a CDV vaccine at least once when they are 16 weeks of age or older. The current vaccine provides protection against all biotypes of CDV, and antigenic variation is not a significant concern.
- Canine distemper is a vaccine preventable disease!

Conjunctivitis, nasal discharge



Photo: LE Carmichael, MJ Appel

Neurological signs, head-pressing



Photo: LE Carmichael, MJ Appel

Neurological signs, seizures



Photo: LE Carmichael, MJ Appel