

# Common Contagious Illness and Disease in the Shelter

*The following diseases should be known by all staff involved in animal care or intake coordination*

Prevention of disease spread in the shelter is not always easy. Confirmed illnesses are easier to contain, but there is a grey area with animals that are on watch for, or are exposed to but not showing any signs of illness.

### Vaccination

American Pets Alive stresses the importance of vaccinating animals **immediately** on intake. Shelters that do not vaccinate on intake (DAPP, FVRCP, Bordetella) will see an increased prevalence of contagious illness, with distemper being the most catastrophic disease spread. Austin Pets Alive Veterinarians recommend quarantining dogs away from the regular population of dogs (adoption floor, isolations) for a minimum of 3 days after their initial distemper vaccine to greatly reduced the spread of this tragic illness to incoming animals. This protocol has been implemented in many shelters during distemper outbreaks and has successfully reduced distemper outbreaks

### How disease is spread

There are several ways that diseases spread. The most common in shelters are:

1. Airborne - sneezing, coughing, shared air + poor ventilation
2. Fomite - transmission on an object such as pens, door knobs, clothes, your hands, shoes
3. Fecal/oral - ingestion of feces (feces from dog park, dirty bowls/kennels, etc)
4. Bodily fluids - blood, saliva, urine, vomit
5. Direct contact

### Keeping a safe distance

Keeping animals a safe distance from each other is one of the most important things staff and volunteers can and should do to prevent spread of disease. Keep animals a **minimum of 3-5 feet** from each other and farther if and when possible. Dogs being walked should not be able to touch or lick each other. Cats should not be able to play "handies" with each other between kennels if possible.

### Disinfecting

Certain diseases such as parvovirus, panleukopenia, and ringworm are very hardy and resistant to ineffective cleaning.

**\*\*ALL HEALTHY PUPPIES WILL EAT A MEATBALL OF FOOD. IF UNINTERESTED, IT MAY BE SICK\*\***

# CHEAT SHEET for deadly diseases

## Parvovirus

**+Mode of transmission** - fecal oral, fomite

**+Symptoms** - diarrhea (+/- bloody), inappetence, vomiting, lethargy.

**+Action** - Test ASAP with IDEXX Parvo SNAP test. Do not move them. This is essential to contain infectious disease. If positive, consider yourself contaminated and use gowns, gloves, shoe covers when moving away from the area. If needed go home and change clothes/shoes.

**+Disinfection** - Bleach, Trifectant, Rescue (Accel), Wysiwash

## Panleukopenia

**+Mode of transmission** - fecal oral, fomite

**+Symptoms** - vomiting is the main symptom with kittens but they will also have diarrhea and not eating, adults with questionable vaccine histories or newly vaccinated and are vomiting

**+Action** - Test asap with parvo SNAP. Do not move them first. If positive consider yourself contaminated. Touching as few objects as possible move to sink and wash hands up to elbows. Spray sink and clothes/shoes with Trifectant. Notify people where the cat was previously. Move cat to isolation area. Spray discovery area with Trifectant, let dry then clean.

**+Disinfection** - bleach, Trifectant, Rescue (Accel), pool shock, Wysiwash

## Calicivirus

**+Mode of transmission** - airborne, saliva, fomite

**+Symptoms** - oral ulcers (see photos below), sneezing and nasal discharge but hard to diagnose with no ulcers. Limping without trauma can be a symptom, check mouth

**+Action** - there is no in-house test, oral ulcers (see photos below) should be treated as calici. Consider yourself contaminated. Touching as few objects as possible move to sink and wash hands up to elbows. Spray sink and clothes/shoes with Trifectant. Notify people where the cat was previously. Move cat to isolation area. Spray discovery area with Trifectant, let dry then clean.

**+Disinfection** - bleach, Trifectant, Rescue (Accel), Wysiwash

## Distemper

**+Mode of transmission** - airborne, saliva, fomite

**+Symptoms** - green/yellow nasal discharge, ring of crust around eyes, pneumonia, twitching, seizures, fever, dandruff. Can be ANY symptom. Distemper affects all body systems. Can manifest in almost any way. ANY combination of these should be considered distemper.

**+Action** - get the dog away from other dogs as quickly as possible. Wear gowns, gloves, shoe covers if needed. Cover the dogs head and carry to isolation area. Dogs should NOT be housed in the same building as dogs that do not have distemper. Ideally all distemper or distemper suspect dogs move into foster homes asap.

**+Disinfection** - bleach, Trifectant, Rescue (Accel), Wysiwash

# Cutting Corners - Why it's deadly

Set the bar high and keep it there. Once cutting corners starts it will be very VERY hard to go back and all it takes is one person.

- Staff HAS to wash hands up to elbows between animals. They may not have realized that Cali the cat sniffed their arm but if she goes and handles Fluffy there is your spread of disease. Most often spread of disease happens when you're not thinking about it and we don't always think about it so make it a routine.
- Wear a gown when holding or carrying dogs with unknown history and wash hands immediately after.
- Remove ALL organic matter before cleaning/bleaching.
- Wipe doors, knobs, chairs, counters, and mop regularly.
- Disinfect areas where sick animals were: lobby, parvo (bleach everything even the ground outside)
- Bleach alone doesn't work you have to use a detergent first. Cleaners like Trifectant and Rescue are a detergent and disinfectant. Check your cleaner.
- Consider yourself 100% contaminated if you came in contact with a contagious disease. In cases like parvo you may need to go home or send staff home to change and come back. Consider keeping extra clothes on hand.
- Unvaccinated or partially vaccinated animals should not be allowed to interact unless purposely housed together.

## Most important

- Keep all dogs, even healthy dogs, AT LEAST 15 feet from each other. Do NOT let them lick, sneeze, or breathe on each other. If possible keep dogs approximately 20ft from each other.
- Wash hands up to elbows between animals.
- VACCINATE ON INTAKE!
- Treat panleuk, calici, parvo, distemper like they are the plague!
- Establish a No Cuddle policy. Cuddling animals spreads disease.
- Litter box scoopers should not be used between cat unless they are cleaned and disinfected