

## Parvovirus Outbreak Sickens Dogs in California

**San Francisco SPCA links a recent outbreak of parvovirus to city parks.**

Posted: November 12, 2008, 5 a.m. EST

A recent outbreak of parvovirus among dogs at the San Francisco SPCA's Veterinary Hospital prompted a health alert this week.

According to the SF/SPCA, the veterinary staff has seen a "dramatic increase" in the cases of parvovirus among puppies and adolescent dogs. So far this month, seven dogs have been diagnosed, compared to one dog per month in previous years.

The animal welfare organization said that the infected dogs have all spent time in Golden Gate Park and in the Haight District. "We urge all dog guardians who frequent these areas to make sure their dogs' inoculations are current," said Jan McHugh-Smith, president.

The disease can be treated, although it is serious and life-threatening, said Dr. Jack Aldridge, director of Veterinary Services at the SF/SPCA. "There is a survival rate of almost 80 percent, if it is treated quickly," he said.

Symptoms include lethargy, vomiting, and bloody diarrhea. Dogs who have these symptoms must be taken to the veterinarian right away, he said.

Prevention of the disease includes inoculation. It spreads through contact with feces or vomit containing the virus. Contamination is known to exist on clothing, dishes, floors, and the earth for five months or longer, in the right conditions.