



For all creatures great and small.

December 8, 2006

## Killer virus strikes down Sydney dogs

The RSPCA's Sydney Veterinary Clinic is seeing a dramatic increase in the number of young dogs struck down with *parvovirus*, a deadly disease that causes often fatal vomiting and diarrhoea.

"We have already diagnosed more cases in the first week of December than in the entire month of December last year," said RSPCA NSW Senior Veterinarian, Dr Simone Maher.

"I've also heard reports of this trend appearing in other areas of Sydney and even interstate."

Parvovirus, commonly known as 'Parvo' is a dreadful and excruciating disease with the mortality rate as high as 50% if puppies are not treated in the early stages. Unfortunately there is no cure for the virus – treatment is intense and the outcome depends on the immune system of the individual dog.

Dr Maher says the disease is generally preventable through the appropriate vaccinations.

"That's the tragedy of this illness - a small investment of around \$70 could later save an owner more than \$1000 in vet bills and the life of their best mate."

Dr Maher has this advice for dog owners, "If you haven't already – get your dog vaccinated. Remember young dogs will generally need a course of two or three injections for full protection. And if you have any concerns about your puppy's health, go to a vet immediately. Early intervention will be your dog's best chance of recovery."

*Parvovirus is most commonly seen in unvaccinated or incompletely vaccinated dogs of less than 18 months old.*

*Early signs may include lethargy and lack of appetite, with hallmark symptoms being vomiting and bloody diarrhoea. The illness is highly contagious to other dogs and may persist in the soil for years after an infected dog has contaminated the area.*

**RSPCA's Sydney Veterinary Clinic is located at 201 Rookwood Rd, Yagoona.  
Phone: 02 9770 7555 or [www.rspcansw.org.au](http://www.rspcansw.org.au)**