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Common Diseases of the Dog

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THIS CIRCULAR discusses some of the important diseases of dogs and gives information on modern methods of prevention.

Canine Distemper

Canine distemper is the most frequent disease of dogs. It is a highly contagious virus disease. A dog with distemper develops a fever, ignores his food, and usually has runny eyes and nose. About half the puppies that become infected with distemper will live, but unfortunately many develop after-effects which permanently ruin their health.

Several methods of vaccination are effective in preventing distemper. Puppies are often given serum, which usually protects against many of the other diseases of the dog. The immunity lasts about 2 weeks, until the puppy is old enough for permanent vaccination which may be one injection or several. If several injections of vaccine are given, they provide a "booster" effect. Remember, a puppy should be vaccinated before distemper or any of these other diseases strikes.

When you get a new puppy, be sure it is permanently vaccinated against distemper. Distemper, hepatitis and leptospirosis immunizing agents are now incorporated into one vaccine. If the vaccine does not contain all of these agents, and this is usually the case, take the puppy to your veterinarian as soon as possible and discuss with him the best method of vaccination.

Infectious Canine Hepatitis

This virus disease is nearly as widespread as canine distemper. Until a few years ago, the two were thought to be one disease. Infectious canine hepatitis may develop so rapidly that some puppies die before the owner realizes they are sick.

This disease strikes the liver. An afflicted dog feels very sick, has a fever, is thirsty and may sleep more than is normal. Hepatitis often is fatal. In other cases, it may be followed by secondary diseases which strike while resistance is low.

If your dog shows signs similar to those of distemper or hepatitis, don't delay. Take him at once to a veterinarian.

Leptospirosis

Leptospirosis is widespread and can affect either the urinary or digestive system of the dog. Leptospirosis spreads readily in

the urine of infected carrier dogs. The owner may notice a bloody or "coffee colored" urine or a "tarry" stool.

The most effective type of vaccination for distemper, hepatitis and leptospirosis is the triple type in which protection is given against all three diseases at one time.

Rabies

Rabies is a serious disease of dogs which also can be transmitted to man and to other animals. Rabies is caused by a virus localized in the nervous system following a bite from a diseased dog or wild animal. It is always fatal. It may take either a "dumb" or a "furious" form, depending on the portion of the brain involved. The virus develops slowly in the body, taking from 2 weeks to several months before disease appears. (See Extension Service circular No. A-358).

Vaccines are available which provide a satisfactory immunity. Many communities have control of stray dogs and require vaccination of all others once a year or every two years. If your community has such a program, realize that it is done for your protection. If no program exists, you are advised to have your dog vaccinated for safety. This is especially true if he is to accompany you on trips.

A certificate showing rabies vaccination is worthwhile insurance. It is necessary before a dog may be brought into Canada. Many of our states have similar regulations.

Worms

Although not a germ or virus disease, worms are mentioned here because most people consider them first after acquiring a new pet.

Not all dogs have worms. However, worms are a common affliction and, when present, do bother your pet. The best prevention is strict sanitation and isolation to prevent contact with worm eggs. This is often inconvenient and likely to be unsuccessful anyway. Also, your puppy may have picked up an infestation very early in life.

Discuss worming on your first visit to the veterinarian. He can check to determine which of several different worms are present and will prescribe the right amount of the correct medication. Properly done, worming is safe and effective; improperly done, it can be ineffective or disastrous.

Other Diseases

One sign that often makes the dog owner believe his dog has worms is anal gland infection or impaction. This condition causes dogs to have an irritation of the anus and they will "bob sled" or in other words, move their rear ends along the ground. This often is mistaken for a sign of parasites.

Many troubles can afflict your dog in addition to those already described. Some diseases are the result of poor feeding or lack of proper care. Others seem to "just happen". Remember, your dog is completely dependent on you for food and care. Time spent in seeing that his simple needs are met is well worth your while.

Examine your dog's coat at least weekly, parting the hair so you can see his skin. If there is evidence of flea or louse infestation, a special powder applied periodically will eliminate such parasites.

Look also for hairless or irritated patches. These may be caused by ringworm or mange, which are serious skin troubles and infectious. Your veterinarian can tell which is present and can apply the proper treatment.

Frequent baths are unnecessary and may actually cause skin trouble. When your dog must have a bath, be sure to use a special dog shampoo or soap. Between baths, combing and brushing will keep his coat in condition. Cleaning his bed often helps control both doggy odors and parasites.

If your dog is sick, do not delay. Take him to a veterinarian for examination and treatment. Veterinarians can get your dog back on the road to recovery, if that is possible.

Healthy Beagle Hound



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