

ONTARIO SPCA AND HUMANE SOCIETY

Ontario's animal charity since 1873.

Disease Name:	Panleukopenia (feline distemper) – Core Vaccine		
Agent:	Parvovirus closely related to canine parvo (undeveloped DNA virus)		
Clinical Signs:	Vomiting, diarrhea, dehydration and sudden death		
Susceptible domestic species	Cats		
Zoonotic?	No		
Diagnostic aids:	ELISA test for fecal antigen (some tests for canine parvo also detect panleukopenia: IDEXX CITE, others)	CBC: leukopenia, especially neutropenia	Vet Clinic necropsy: segmental enteritis
Test sensitivity (false negatives)	Good, but not as good as for parvo. False negatives are possible.	Good at height of infection (day 4-6). Less likely to see CBC changes in mildly affected animals.	Moderate – don't always see classical segmental pattern, or enteritis may not be grossly appreciated at all.
Test specificity (false positives)	Very good except for rare weak positive post-vaccination (1 in 64, see below)	Moderate – can also be caused by Salmonellosis, FeLV, others	Good – true segmental enteritis is uncommon with other conditions
Test comments	False positive possible 5-12 days after MLV vaccine (may be as early as 3 days with high antigen mass vaccine). Usually weak if present.		Histopathology performed by commercial lab is gold standard.
***Vaccine available?	Yes: Subcutaneous available as modified live recommended, with respiratory viruses or as single antigen, considered a core vaccine, immediately upon intake.		
Vaccine efficacy	Efficacy of subcutaneous modified live is excellent. Vaccine is most beneficial if given immediately upon intake . Full immunity is reached 72 hours after inoculation. Maternal antibody interference is possible in kittens less than 12-16 weeks. Modified live vaccine should not be used in kittens < 4 weeks or pregnant queens expected to carry litter to term (although abortions and kitten defects are rare).		
Excreted in :	All body secretions during acute disease, but most often feces – shedding often <i>precedes</i> clinical signs by a couple of days.		
Mode of transmission:	HIGHLY contagious – direct contact, fomite spread, mechanically spread by rodents and insects, can be aerosolized by high pressure sprayers.		
Disinfection	THOROUGH cleaning followed by oxidizing agents (Accel, Peroxigard Plus, Virkon or Trifectant). No way to fully decontaminate organic matter such as grass or dirt yards.		
Incubation	3-14 days (usually 5-7 days)		



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Post-recovery shedding	Maximum 6 weeks. CAUTION: may shed virus 2-3 days before clinical signs are observed; therefore proper PPE usage is essential and mandatory.
Carrier state?	No, but mild or unapparent infection is common, especially in adults. Cats may uncommonly be carriers of canine parvovirus.
PPE required	Gloves, gown
Control	Effective vaccination. Separation of incoming cats during potential incubation time; effective use of appropriate PPE to minimize spread.