

Small Animal Newsletter

PARVO IN DISGUISE: Macy's Story

When six-month-old Macy, a Jack Russell–Foxy cross, arrived at our Otorohanga clinic, her owners thought she had a sore tummy from eating some old butter. She'd been vomiting, had mild yellow diarrhoea, wasn't eating well, and had lost her usual terrier spark. Overnight, she became even more unwell. Because Macy was young and not fully vaccinated for parvovirus, we ran a parvo test as soon as she arrived — and it came back strongly positive.

Macy was immediately admitted to our isolation ward for intensive treatment. She received intravenous fluids, anti-nausea medication, probiotics, syringe feeding, and round-the-clock nursing care. After just one day, she was already showing signs of improvement. The next morning, she received additional fluids under the skin, another anti-nausea dose, and probiotics to continue at home.

Her dedicated owners played a huge role in her recovery, syringe-feeding her every three hours and giving electrolytes as instructed. After a further 24 hours, Macy was well on her way back to her bright, energetic self.

Other Treatment Options for Parvo

While hospitalisation gives dogs the best chance of surviving parvovirus, there is an alternative option for some cases. "Out-patient care" involves giving fluids under the skin, an anti-nausea injection, and supportive care at home. This approach can be more affordable, but it is important to understand that the success rate is significantly lower than with full hospital treatment. Parvo is an aggressive virus, and many dogs need intensive, round-the-clock support to pull through.

A Reminder for All Dog Owners

Parvovirus can be deadly, especially for young puppies. While many cases involve severe vomiting

and bloody diarrhoea, not all dogs show the classic symptoms. Recently, we've seen a spike in parvo cases in Otorohanga, and some pets were brought in because owners thought they had simply eaten something unusual.

Vaccination remains the best protection. If your dog is vomiting or has diarrhoea, particularly if they are young or unvaccinated, please let our team know when booking your appointment. This helps us take the necessary precautions to protect all pets in our care. Parvo is extremely contagious, and it's often impossible to pinpoint exactly where a dog picked it up.



In Summary

Macy's case is a reminder that parvovirus doesn't always look dramatic at first and that early action can make all the difference. With prompt testing, the right level of care, and dedicated owners, Macy made a full recovery. Parvo is a serious and highly contagious disease, but it is also one we can prevent. Keeping vaccinations up to date and seeking veterinary advice at the first sign of vomiting or diarrhoea gives every dog the best chance of staying healthy and safe.



CRATE TRAINING FOR PUPPIES

Crate training a puppy takes advantage of the dog's natural instincts to seek out a comfortable, quiet, and safe place when the environment around them becomes too loud or overwhelming.

It's an important tool for preventing dogs from chewing on items in the home or during house-training.

Crates are also a safe way to transport your dog in the car and when they come into our clinic and are put into one of our kennels, they will be used to the confinement, making their vet visit more relaxing.

Size - The crate must be large enough for your dog to stand up, turn around, and lie down comfortably. If it is too large, a puppy may use one side as a bathroom.

Not to be used as a punishment - Using a crate as a "time-out" or punishment creates negative associations, making the dog fear or resent the space.

Puppy safety - Remove collars, tags, or harnesses before crating to prevent choking hazards.

Time Limits - Generally, puppies should not be

crated for more than their age in months plus one hour. Adults should not exceed 6–8 hours without a break

Introducing your dog to the crate

- Place the crate in a central living area with the door open.
- Make the crate inviting and comfortable with a comfy bed, toys, and treats. Allow your puppy to investigate the crate on their own terms and once they have settled inside the crate, reward their behaviour.
- Start feeding your dog's regular meals inside the crate. This builds a strong positive association with the space.
- Place the bowl inside the crate and encourage your puppy to enter with a command such as "crate" or "bed".
- When your puppy readily enters the crate for meals, start asking it to go in and then place the food inside.
- Once they are comfortable eating inside, briefly close the door while they eat. Gradually increase the duration of closed-door time while you remain in the room.
- Once your dog is happy in the crate for about 10 –15 minutes after their meal, start leaving the door closed for longer periods.
- Keep increasing the length of time that you crate your dog.

Be patient – it can take weeks until your dog is comfortable. Be careful that your dog doesn't spend too much time in a crate. While it's a good tool for toilet training and preventing destruction, too much time in a crate can affect your young dog's muscle development and condition.

By following these steps, your dog's crate will become its safe space where they can take a break when they need to, knowing their sanctuary is there when they need it.



MEET THE TEAM

Kate, Veterinarian - Otorohanga

Meet Kate – One of Our Mixed Animal Veterinarians. Originally from Wellington’s South Coast, Kate joined our team after graduating as a veterinarian in 2024 and is now based in Otorohanga as one of our mixed vets.

Kate loves the sense of connection that comes with working in a rural community. She enjoys building strong relationships with clients and says the Waikato weather is a definite upgrade from Wellington!

No two days are the same for Kate, and that’s exactly what she enjoys most. From helping with calving on dairy farms, to performing surgery in the clinic, visiting lifestyle block animals, or treating wildlife—she thrives on the variety and unpredictability of rural practice.

Kate also brings a special passion for wildlife to the team. She has been involved in bird banding with the Wellington Bird Banding Team since she was just seven years old and is a member of the NZ

Wildlife Veterinarians committee. Her experience is particularly valuable in Otorohanga, where we work closely with the Otorohanga Kiwi House.

Outside of work, Kate enjoys playing the piano and making the most of the great outdoors.



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