



## Concerned about Parvo?

"If puppies are currently receiving their vaccinations, and the puppy lessons are held in a clean facility that requires proof of vaccines for all dogs entering the property, then I believe the risk of parvovirus is very small. In 15 years as a veterinarian, I've not yet seen a puppy contract parvovirus from going to puppy lessons. Not to say it couldn't ever happen, but I do believe the risk of Parvo is much smaller than the risk of behavior problems if pups are not well socialized and trained. I've started my own puppies in lessons before 4 months of age.

There are veterinarians who believe differently. I know that some veterinarians don't like to take any risk of Parvo at all. But it's been my experience that many more dogs are at risk for euthanasia or abandonment due to behavior problems than will ever get sick with parvovirus. That's why I believe that educating with early puppy lessons in a facility that is clean and sanitary is worth the small risk."

Parvo is still commonly seen in Portland. I recommend that pups not be taken to parks or any other highly public places. But I do recommend, for exposure to their environment and socialization purposes, that people do get their pups out - visiting friend's houses where the dogs are healthy and vaccinated, definitely car rides, DEFINITELY puppy lessons! :) Even limited walking on leash in their own neighborhoods (presuming they don't have a lot of stray or uncared-for dogs running around). There is a risk to leash walking, and some veterinarians think it's a bad idea. There are pros and cons to leash walking.

For example, I've walked my pups up and down my street for a block or two, but I didn't take them for long walks until they got their last vaccinations. Also if you want a dog that doesn't pull on leash, don't let them till you teach them leash manners. DO not attach a leash to pups flat collar; rather have pup wear a "Step in" harness.

Find creative ways to exercise your pup. A walk is not beneficial to your dog in terms of exercise. Your dog needs to run free, have time to sniff and investigate their environment. Walks that result in your dog pulling on leash just allow your dog to practice the wrong behaviors on leash. The SAFEST recommendation is not to leash walk the puppy at all.

Most puppies balk on leash anyway during the fear imprint period.

Dr. Christine Fletcher, DVM & Gina's Micciulla

**UNLEASH YOURSELF**

503-349-3088

[gina@unleashyourself.biz](mailto:gina@unleashyourself.biz)

[www.unleashyourself.biz](http://www.unleashyourself.biz)