



Canine Influenza

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is Canine Influenza?

Sometimes referred to as “dog flu,” Canine Influenza is a highly contagious virus causing respiratory disease in dogs. The current outbreak involves a strain that originated in China known as H3N2. It was first diagnosed in the United States in 2015. Another strain of Canine Influenza, H3N8 has been in the United States since 1999.

What are the symptoms?

Disease is usually mild, with cough, nasal discharge, and lethargy. Most dogs will have a fever which may manifest as depression and listlessness; affected dogs may not eat.

How do I distinguish influenza from kennel cough?

The two diseases can manifest in very similar ways. Diagnostic testing is the only sure way to identify the influenza virus.

When should I contact my veterinarian?

If your dog has recently been commingled with other dogs, such as at a boarding facility, groomer, dog show, or other venue, and begins coughing, contact your veterinarian for specific recommendations. It is especially important if your dog is listless, depressed and has quit eating.

How do I protect my dog?

If you plan to board or groom your dog routinely, attend shows or competitions, or otherwise bring your dog into contact with other dogs often, you may want to consider vaccinating your dog. Your veterinarian is the best person to gauge your animal's risk for exposure. Bear in mind that the initial series of vaccines takes several weeks to complete, so plan accordingly.

If your dog has other medical conditions (cancer, chronic disease, etc.), is very young, or is elderly, minimize contact with other dogs. These dogs are also candidates for vaccination.

What is the treatment for a dog infected with Canine Influenza?

There is no specific treatment for canine influenza. Supportive care is important, which may include fluids, and antibiotics for secondary bacterial infection. Oxygen administration may be required if disease is severe.



How is the virus spread?

This virus is spread via aerosol as well as direct (nose to nose) and indirect (contaminated objects like bowls and crates) contact. Luckily, the virus is very easy to inactivate – any soap or detergent will kill influenza. If you contact other dogs, wash your hands before touching your own dog.

If you take your coughing dog to a veterinarian's office, let them know in advance so they can take appropriate measures to minimize contact with other dogs.

Can my other pets contract influenza from my dog?

While it has not been proven with this strain of influenza, it is advisable for pet owners to isolate any affected animal. This includes from other pets in your household, such as other dogs, cats, and even ferrets.

Can I get influenza from my dog?

Human spread of this virus has not been documented to occur. However, it is best to limit close contact with any species that has any influenza virus.