

Canine Cough

What you need to know!

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The Misconception

One of the public relations problems for boarding kennels today is caused by a much-misunderstood dog disease called "canine cough" tracheobronchitis or often improperly referred to as "kennel cough" and that "canine cough" can only be contracted in kennels. As a dog owner you should be aware of some of the facts about this disease.

Canine cough can be contracted anywhere dogs gather, for example:

- Boarding Kennels
- Veterinary Hospitals
- Pet Stores
- Dog Parks
- Grooming Centers
- Etc

Knowing this may help you understand how and when your dog is at risk.

In addition, the Bordetella vaccine does not provide 100% protection. In fact, there are so many circumstances that contribute to a dog getting kennel cough that it is impossible to protect them completely.



Kennel Cough, also called infectious Tracheobronchitis, is a quite common upper respiratory infection in dogs. If your canine family member seems to be coughing or making a choking sound, they may have canine cough, especially if they recently spent time at an animal shelter, boarding facility, or dog park where they were exposed to a lot of other dogs.

Canine cough is a form of bronchitis and is similar to a chest cold in humans and has a number of different causes, the most common of which is the Bordetella bronchiseptica bacteria. Many people think Bordetella bacteria alone causes kennel cough, but that's technically inaccurate. In fact, dogs who acquire Bordetella bacteria usually also have a virus such as adenovirus, distemper, herpes, or Parainfluenza that makes them more vulnerable to infection.

Kennel cough is very contagious, and dogs can remain infectious for six to 8 weeks after symptoms resolve.

The canine respiratory tract is coated in a protective lining of mucus, but if this lining is compromised an infection could take hold from the inhaled particles, which results in inflammation of the larynx and trachea and it's the inflammation that causes the coughing.

If the healthy dog's respiratory tract is compromised by stressors such as travel, being housed in a crowded environment, or infectious viruses that could be floating around, then Bordetella bronchiseptica bacteria, in fact, the chief bacterial agent can enter the respiratory tract. Bordetella bacteria are usually accompanied by at least one other infectious agent, usually a virus, so it is actually multiple infections occurring at once and not just the bacterial infection.

How is it cured?

Just as in the case of the common cold, tracheobronchitis is not "cured" but must run its course. Many times, antibiotics will be prescribed to prevent secondary infection and sometimes cough suppressants will be prescribed to reduce excessive coughing, but these medications do not attack the disease itself.

Who can get it?

Any dog can get canine cough, even with the vaccine.

However, young puppies and senior dogs have more difficulty should they get the virus. These dogs should be watched closely and see the veterinarian if symptoms persist or your dog becomes lethargic, stops eating or has trouble breathing.

Can the kennel prevent my dog from catching tracheobronchitis?

Unfortunately, no amount of supervision, sanitation and personalized care can prevent a dog from catching an airborne virus.

All we can do is to make sure our clients are well informed of what it is and if there is ever a suspicion of an outbreak.