

Canine Influenza

“Dog flu”



Recent stories are warning pet owners about the dangers of canine influenza. Typically, these stories are referring to one of two influenza viruses, the H3N8 and H3N2. These strains of the viruses have mutated from the horse influenza virus (H3N8) and avian influenza virus (H3N2), they are currently species-specific viruses. Meaning, only animals from the same species can get sick when exposed to the virus. The H3N8 virus has been seen in the United States since 2004. The United States first detected the H3N2 virus in 2015.

Although, dogs can become ill with Canine influenza by itself. Often a dog has developed “kennel cough” as well. Some can also develop secondary infections, including pneumonia. Dogs can become infected with canine influenza during any time of the year. Just like with the human flu, puppies, seniors and dogs with other health conditions are more susceptible to being infected by the canine influenza. The virus is highly contagious - with 80% of dogs who are exposed to it will develop the illness. Less than 10% will die from canine influenza - as long as proper care is initiated as soon as symptoms appear.

How is canine influenza spread?

Any dog that has contact with other dogs at: kennels, doggie day care, dog parks, stores that allow dogs, dog shows, shelters - are at risk for contacting canine influenza. Toys, food/water bowls, bedding/ beds and clothing can all transmit the virus from one dog to another. Any person that has been around infected dogs can transmit the virus to a new dog if they didn't wash their hands and change their clothing.

Symptoms of canine influenza?

Some infected dogs may not show any symptoms but are still contagious. Dogs with canine influenza can show a variety of symptoms that can include any of the following:

- Persistent cough
- Nasal discharge
- Fever (often 104-105°F)
- Lethargy
- Eye discharge
- Decreased appetite

Diagnosis and Treatment

If you are concerned that your dog has canine influenza or kennel cough, call our office at 717-477-8939 to schedule an appointment. Once you arrive at the appointment time, please leave your dog in your vehicle and call into our office to let us know you have arrived. This is to lessen the exposure of these illness, to other client's pets. Please remember that you can spread the virus by touching other people's pets and the door handles.

Since other conditions can cause similar symptoms, our veterinarians may suggest running additional testing including bloodwork and X-rays.

If it is a virus, it will have to run its course which can take 2-3 weeks to recover. The infected dog should be isolated from other dogs during that time. Some dogs will need supportive care with antibiotics, fluids and supplemental feedings. Practice good hygiene and sanitation to reduce the spread of influenza. Influenza viruses don't usually survive in the environment beyond 48 hours and can be killed by commonly used disinfectants.

Prevention

Again, good hygiene and sanitation reduces the spread of illnesses. There are vaccines for both canine influenza and kennel cough.

Additional information found at: <http://www.agriculture.pa.gov/foodforthought/Pages/Article.aspx?post=50>
<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/canineflu/keyfacts.htm> <https://www.avma.org/public/PetCare/Pages/CanineInfluenza.aspx>