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Canine Influenza and Kennel Cough Information Sheet

What is Canine Influenza and what is Kennel Cough?

Both Canine Influenza and Kennel Cough are contagious upper respiratory infections in dogs. Canine Influenza is caused by one specific virus and Kennel Cough is a term used to describe multiple viruses or bacterial infections. Both may occur at higher rates in places that dogs frequent, including dog parks, dog daycares, kennels, and veterinary offices. They are both highly contagious and spread much the same way the human cold or flu spreads. **It is important to remember that dogs can be contagious even if they are not showing any clinical signs of being sick which is one of the reasons these diseases can spread so quickly.**

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms can vary, but are typically characterized by either a dry or wet cough, nasal discharge, listlessness, and sometimes a fever.

What are the treatments?

Canine Influenza is a virus and many strains of Kennel Cough are also viruses. There is no “cure” for a virus. Treatment depends on the severity of the dog’s symptoms and whether the veterinarian considers it to be a virus or a bacterial infection. Your veterinarian may choose to let the virus run its course or may suspect that the symptoms are caused by a bacterial infection and may prescribe antibiotics. Many veterinarians do put dogs on antibiotics even when they suspect a virus is the cause to help protect against secondary infections including pneumonia. Additionally, cough tabs, nebulizer treatments, and fluids may be given depending on the dog’s symptoms.

How are they transmitted?

They are transmitted by coming into contact with an infected dog’s body secretions, whether it is through direct contact or indirect contact such as collars, leashes, water bowls, etc.

Are there vaccinations and will they prevent my dog from getting sick?

There are two separate vaccinations that may reduce the severity of the symptoms and the time your dog has symptoms, but they **do not prevent your dog from getting sick**. The Canine Influenza virus and vaccination are relatively new so there is still much to learn about them. Currently, recommendations are to give the Canine Influenza vaccination initially in two separate doses two weeks apart (your dog will need a booster approximately two weeks after the first vaccination) and then annually going forward. The Kennel Cough vaccination is either given every 6 months or annually depending on your veterinarian’s recommendation.

Does City Bark require these vaccinations?

City Bark does require the Kennel Cough (Bordatella) vaccination and strongly recommends the Canine Influenza vaccination. We strongly recommend the Canine Influenza vaccination because research shows that while it does not prevent infection it does reduce the severity of the disease. It is a more expensive vaccination than Bordatella and runs approximately \$30 per shot. The very first time your dog is vaccinated they will also need a two week booster shot making the initial vaccination approximately \$60. After the initial 2 week booster shot, your dog will only require the vaccination annually.

What does City Bark do to reduce the likelihood of my dog getting sick?

We treat all health issues at City Bark very seriously and want to assure you we are doing all we can to take preventative measures including requiring the Bordatella vaccination, strongly encouraging the Canine Influenza vaccination, adhering to the highest standards of cleaning and disinfecting, and isolating any known infected dogs immediately. Unfortunately, both diseases are so highly contagious that no amount of supervision, sanitation, or personal care can guarantee complete prevention of Canine Influenza or Kennel Cough.

What can I do to help prevent the spread of disease?

Keep in mind that Canine Influenza and Kennel Cough are much like the human flu or cold and spread much the same way. Talk to your veterinarian and keep your dog current on all recommended vaccinations. Keep your dog out of daycare and other social situations for at least 10 days if you have reason to believe your dog was exposed to either Canine Influenza or Kennel Cough. Most importantly, remember you know your dog the best so if you suspect your dog might be “a little under the weather” keep your dog out of social situations as your dog is likely to be contagious even if your dog is not coughing or showing other obvious clinical signs of being sick. Please alert City Bark if your dog shows any symptoms or if you suspect your dog is sick.