

# 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 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. A bivalent vaccine that offers protection against both H3N8 and H3N2 canine influenza is available. They may not necessarily prevent infection but can substantially reduce disease severity and duration of illness, as well as viral shedding. Boosters must be given annually, and as the initial series can take several weeks, it is best to plan with your veterinarian accordingly.

If your dog has other medical conditions, such as cancer, chronic disease, etc., or is very young or elderly, it is best to minimize their contact with other dogs. These dogs are also strong candidates for vaccination against canine influenza.

Biosecurity and isolation protocols is recommended with dogs with suspected or confirmed canine influenza. Keep potentially infected dogs 20 feet apart at minimum from other dogs and cats, and thoroughly clean and disinfect areas where these dogs have been present.



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

There is no specific treatment for canine influenza. Supportive care is important and may include fluids, antimicrobials for secondary bacterial infections, nebulization, or nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medications to mediate inflammation. Oxygen administration may be required in severe cases. However, in most cases, canine influenza is a self-limiting disease, with dogs recovering within two to three weeks with little if any supportive care required.

### ***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 these strains of influenza, it is advisable for pet owners to isolate any affected animal. Dogs with H3N2 canine influenza need to be isolated for at least 21 days, and dogs with H3N8 canine influenza for at least 7 days. At risk pets in your household include 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.