

Kennel cough FAQ's

Kennel cough is a respiratory disease which impacts dogs and is similar to the flu. Also called Infectious Tracheobronchitis, the disease can cause coughing, high temperature, nasal discharge and in occasional cases pneumonia.

Kennel cough is considered highly contagious. It is important to understand how this virus can impact our pets at Doggy Day Camp, Boarding and other open play environments e.g. Training Classes.

Most dogs will only experience mild coughing however puppies and older dogs are at greatest risk as their immune system is not so robust.

Kennel Cough:

- The bacteria can be treated with antibiotics (there are numerous bacteria and viruses which can cause kennel cough)
- The virus is treated with "supportive" care such as: bed rest, low activity/decrease activity, hydration, not pulling on collar, and keep warm.

WHAT IS "KENNEL COUGH?" Kennel Cough (Infectious Tracheobronchitis) is a highly contagious airborne upper-respiratory disease. The incubation period of the disease is roughly 3 to 7 days. Incubation period is the number of days from the time a dog comes into contact with an infected dog before signs of the disease will show. The main symptom is a gagging cough, sometimes accompanied by sneezing and nasal discharge, which can last anywhere from a few days to several weeks. It often sounds like the dog is trying to cough up something that is stuck in its throat. Although this coughing is very annoying, it does not usually develop into anything more serious but it is recommended to be treated by a vet. It can lower the dog's resistance to other diseases making him susceptible to secondary infections.

HOW IS IT CURED? Just as in the common cold in humans, Kennel Cough 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.

DOES KENNEL COUGH OCCUR ONLY IN KENNELS? No. Since this bacteria can be present anywhere, and can travel for considerable distances through the air, they can affect any dog... even one which never leaves its own back garden. But kennel cough is more likely to occur when the concentration of dogs is greater such as at a dog show, kennel, vets and other places dogs go e.g. pet shops. Dogs can also be exposed while running loose or while being walked near other dogs or playing in the park.

AREN'T THE CHANCES OF CATCHING IT GREATER WHEN A DOG IS IN A KENNEL? It can be because, in a kennel, a dog encounters two conditions that do not exist at home which are the proximity to a number of potentially contagious dogs, and the excitement of a less familiar environment, which can result in lowered resistance to disease. These same factors explain why children are more likely to catch the flu in school, rather than at home.

IS THIS VIRUS A CONSTANT PROBLEM? No. Kennel Cough, like the flu, is often seasonal. It also tends to hit an entire geographical area at one time. When vets begin to see cases, they normally come from every kennel in town, dog park users, as well as from individual dog owners whose dogs were not kennelled at all. When the virus has run its course, the vets might not see another case for months.

CAN MY DOG BE VACCINATED TO PROTECT HIM AGAINST KENNEL COUGH? Yes! Vaccines against Kennel Cough however are not always routinely used as part of a puppy and an adult dog's yearly check up. Please explain to your vet that your dog comes to Boarding or Doggy Day Camp and they need to be vaccinated with the Bordetella vaccination (which is administered up the nose). It is important to understand the Bordetella vaccination used to prevent this viral disease is made from only one strain of over the 100 different strains of the virus. Thus the vaccination is not as effective against some strains as others. Some strains are not included in any of the vaccinations. Therefore, in some cases there is no prevention against Kennel Cough.

CAN MYPETSTOP PREVENT MY DOG FROM CATCHING KENNEL COUGH? Unfortunately not. No amount of supervision, sanitation, or personalised care can prevent a dog from "catching" an airborne disease. All that we can do is to recommend immunisation against Kennel Cough. We also refuse to take in any obviously sick dogs; we listen and watch for any signs of sickness, and make sure that any dog requiring veterinary attention receives it as quickly as possible. Also, in the event of an outbreak mypetstop commits to take every action to prevent further spread, e.g. closing facilities such as doggy day camp.