

July 2022

What's in a Cough

Maybe you take your pet to a dog park for exercise, or you get your pet groomed every few months. Maybe you've had to board your dog while you're on vacation. If any of these incidences sound familiar, you've likely had to get your dog vaccinated for kennel cough.

Kennel Cough

Kennel cough, also known as canine infectious tracheobronchitis, is a series of different bacterial and viral infections that cause coughing, discharge from the nose and eyes, depression, and lack of appetite. While kennel cough is not deadly – think of it like the common cold in humans – there can be mild cases and more severe cases of the disease. Sometimes, symptoms can last for up to 3-4 weeks!

Kennel cough is transmitted by respiratory secretions (nasal discharge, sputum from coughing, etc). Furthermore, kennel cough is extremely contagious. Even harmless gestures like sniffing each other or sharing food and water dishes is enough to spread the illness!

Treatment and Prevention

A lot of times, the infection is self-limiting. Since the disease is often spread by bacterial agents, a course of antibiotics may be prescribed by your veterinarian to help your dog get rid of the infection more quickly. Furthermore, there are chronic cases that can last for several weeks or even a few months. In these cases, an anti-inflammatory or steroid may be prescribed to help with the inflammation from the chronic coughing.

There are several vaccines that treat kennel cough. Most of the vaccines protect against several adenoviruses, parainfluenza virus, and the bacterium *Bordetella bronchiseptica*. The vaccine also comes in several different forms, including an injectable vaccine, an oral vaccine, or an intranasal vaccine. Due to how quickly the intranasal and oral vaccines lead to local immunity, these vaccines are often recommended over the injectable, which requires multiple doses for full immunity.

That being said, since there are a multitude of viral and bacterial causes, it is still possible for your dog to get kennel cough from another source. Therefore, if your dog develops a cough after being in contact with other dogs, make sure to ask your veterinarian whether it is possible for your dog to have kennel cough.

If you have any further questions about fleas, please feel free to reach out to me or one of our staff members!

Best regards,

Rachel Rielinger, DVM



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