

YOUR NEW BEST FRIEND: KENNEL COUGH

We take all precautions to help prevent the development of Kennel Cough in our canine shelter residents including immediately vaccinating all new dogs at BHS for Bordetella, Parainfluenza, and Canine Influenza. Occasionally, some dogs still contract this respiratory condition despite vaccination and strict sanitation protocols within the shelter. Please monitor your pet for signs of Kennel Cough during the two weeks following adoption and seek veterinary care if clinical symptoms develop.

What Is kennel cough?

Kennel cough is a term loosely used to describe a complex of infections—both viral and bacterial—that causes inflammation of a dog's voice box and windpipe. It's a form of bronchitis and is similar to a chest cold in humans. Though it usually clears up on its own, kennel cough is highly contagious to other dogs.

What are the general symptoms of kennel cough?

A persistent dry cough with a "honking" sound is the main clue your dog's caught kennel cough. In most cases, they will appear healthy except for the cough. Their appetite and activity level usually won't change, but don't be alarmed if they gags and cough up a white, foamy phlegm—these signs are often worse after exercise, or if they're excited or pull against the collar. Some dogs may also develop a fever and nasal discharge.

What should I do if I think my dog has kennel cough?

If you suspect your dog has kennel cough, immediately isolate her from all other dogs and call your veterinarian.

How did my dog catch kennel cough?

Dogs can catch kennel cough in several ways. It can spread through aerosols in the air, directly from dog to dog, or through germs on contaminated objects. Kennel cough is often spread in enclosed areas with poor air circulation—while boarding in a kennel or an animal shelter, for example, or through direct contact while sitting in a vaccination clinic, training class or dog-grooming facility.

Kennel cough is so contagious that your pet might even catch it from sharing a water dish at the dog park or by simply greeting another dog. Most kennels will not board your pet without proof of a recent vaccination against parainfluenza and Bordetella, two of the main causes of kennel cough.



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Which dogs are prone to kennel cough?

Most often, dogs who have frequent contact with other dogs, especially in enclosed or poorly ventilated areas, are most prone to becoming infected. Young and unvaccinated dogs are also at higher risk.

How is kennel cough prevented?

The best way to prevent kennel cough is to prevent exposure. Vaccinations are also available for several of the agents known to be involved in kennel cough, including parainfluenza, Bordetella and adenovirus-2. Ask your vet if these are recommended, and how often—but please keep in mind that vaccinations aren't useful if a dog has already caught the virus.

How is kennel cough treated?

It's smart to see your veterinarian if your dog develops a cough. In some cases, you may be advised to simply let kennel cough run its course and heed the following:

- Keep your dog isolated from other dogs
- Try a humidifier or vaporizer, or let your dog into the bathroom while you shower—the steam will help soothe their irritated breathing passages
- Avoid exposing your dog to cigarette smoke or other noxious, irritating fumes
- Your vet might prescribe a cough suppressant if they feel that could help your dog's symptoms
- If your dog pulls against their collar while being walked, replace it with a harness until the coughing subsides
- Supportive care is very important—be sure your dog is eating, drinking and in a stress-free environment

How long does kennel cough last?

In most cases, the signs of kennel cough gradually decrease and disappear after three weeks. Young puppies, elderly dogs and other immunocompromised animals may take up to six weeks or more to recover. In some cases, animals may remain infectious for long periods of time even after the symptoms have cleared up.

When is it time to see the vet again?

You should see some improvement in your dog's condition within one week of treatment, but be alert to how long the symptoms last. If your dog has nasal discharge, is breathing rapidly, refuses to eat or seems lethargic, take them to the veterinarian right away. Serious cases of kennel cough can lead to pneumonia if left untreated.

