

Infectious Canine Tracheobronchitis

“Kennel Cough”

Kennel cough, the common name given to infectious canine Tracheobronchitis, is a highly contagious respiratory disease among dogs. It is typified by inflammation of the trachea and bronchi. This disease is found throughout the world and is known to infect a high percentage of dogs at least once during their lifetime. It is also sometimes referred to as Bordetellosis, or Bordatella.

Young puppies often suffer the most severe complications that can result from this disease since they have immature immune systems. Also at increased risk are older dogs, who may have decreased immune capabilities, pregnant bitches, who also have lowered immunity, and dogs with preexisting respiratory diseases.

Prevention:

There are three types of vaccines available against kennel cough: an injectable, intranasal, and newer oral form. Although these vaccines don't provide 100% protection, they provide some protection against kennel cough and decrease the severity of symptoms. Speak with your veterinarian to learn more about kennel cough and the best way to protect your dog from it. Although it is not required by CA State law that all boarding dogs be vaccinated from Bordatella, it is highly suggested that any dog be fully vaccinated.

Symptoms:

If your dog is affected with kennel cough, you may notice one or more of the following symptoms:

- A strong cough, often with a “honking” or “hacking” sound – this is the most obvious symptom.
- Nasal discharge.
- Sneezing.
- Lethargy.
- Loss of appetite.
- Low to moderate fever.
- In mild cases, dogs often remain active and eating.
- In more severe cases, Symptoms progress and can lead to pneumonia, high fever, and death. Young puppies, senior dogs, pregnant bitches, and dogs with preexisting conditions are at the highest risk of these severe symptoms.

Treatment:

Treatment depends on the severity of the infection. If your dog is alert, active, eating well, and has only minor symptoms, your veterinarian may only prescribe general supportive care like rest and good hydration and nutrition. More severely affected dogs benefit from medications that reduce inflammation and coughing. If a bacterial infection is present, antibiotics may help

shorten the course of the disease. Dogs with pneumonia often need to be hospitalized for more aggressive treatment

Management:

In order to prevent the spread of this disease, dogs with kennel cough should be isolated until they are better and no longer contagious. Dogs who are at high risk for infection (e.g., those who attend shows or spend time in boarding or day care facilities) should be vaccinated against *Bordetella Bronchiseptica* and canine parainfluenza virus. All dogs should be vaccinated against canine adenovirus.

Even after being vaccinated, dogs may still acquire kennel cough (although usually a less severe form than they would have otherwise). It is best to be observant and prepared.