

Canine Influenza

What is Canine Influenza?

The canine flu is caused by the Canine Influenza Virus (CIV), and was first discovered in 2004. The canine influenza virus is known to infect dogs and horses, *not* humans. Unlike the seasonal flu which humans get, the canine flu can occur year round. This virus is highly contagious to any dog that is exposed, regardless of their age or breed. Canine influenza is spread through nasal and mucosal secretions (coughing and sneezing). It can also be spread through contaminated water and food bowls as well as contaminated objects such as kennel spaces, collars, leashes, etc.

What are the symptoms of Canine Influenza?

- Coughing
- Nasal or eye discharge
- Sneezing
- Lethargy
- Vomiting
- Fever
- Lack of appetite



How do I protect my dog from the Canine Influenza?

There is a canine influenza vaccine available which helps protect dogs from the canine influenza virus. This vaccine is considered a “lifestyle” vaccine and is recommended for dogs that are at risk. Risk factors include dogs who use boarding facilities or grooming facilities; dogs that go to dog parks, doggie day care or dog beaches. When initially starting the canine influenza vaccine, 2 boosters (given 3 weeks apart) are necessary to create the best immunity, then the vaccine can be given once annually for maintenance. Although the vaccine is the most effective way to reduce the risk of contracting CIV, the vaccine may not completely protect against infection. The vaccine does prove to reduce severity and duration of illness, as well as the period of time of which the dog may spread the virus.

What should I do if my dog has been exposed to Canine Influenza?

If your dog has been exposed and is showing symptoms of CIV, it is important to contact your veterinarian for further instructions. The virus typically takes 2-3 weeks to “run its course” but some dogs may develop secondary bacterial infections. You should also consider isolating ill dogs to prevent spread of the virus. Good hygiene will also help reduce the spread of the virus. Cleaning contaminated objects such as bowls, bedding, leashes and surfaces with disinfectants (10% bleach solution) helps reduce the spread of the virus. Persons caring for ill dogs should also practice good hygiene.