



## **CANINE INFLUENZA**

### **What is Canine Influenza?**

Canine Influenza is caused by the canine influenza virus (CIV), an influenza A virus, which produces a highly contagious upper respiratory infection in dogs. The specific strains currently causing problems are the H3N8 and, more recently, the H3N2 variant.

### **How Is It Spread?**

It is highly infectious and spreads rapidly from dog to dog through respiratory secretions in the air via coughing, sneezing, or barking, and by contact with contaminated objects like clothing, bowls, leashes, etc.

### **What Are The Symptoms?**

Coughing, nasal discharge, sneezing, lethargy, fever, lack of appetite.

### **What if I Think My Dog Has the Flu?**

Call your veterinarian immediately before traveling to any veterinary clinic and avoid all contact with other animals. To minimize the spread of the virus, you may be asked to stay in your vehicle with your pet until a history is gathered and an examination completed by your veterinarian. Isolation from other dogs is critical.

### **What is the Treatment?**

For most viral diseases like influenza, the treatment is symptom based. It is aimed at reducing the symptoms for the comfort and health of the pet until the pet recovers. Most dogs recover from H3N2 within 2-3 weeks. For a minimum of 21 days, the dog must be isolated from all other animals.

### **Can Cats Get Canine Influenza?**

Yes, but it is rare. They will display similar symptoms such as upper respiratory signs, lethargy, lack of appetite, fever. Call your veterinarian if your cat is showing any suspicious signs. There is currently no approved vaccine for cats.

### **Prevention?**

First, avoid traveling with your dog near locations of a known outbreak. This includes going to the groomer, dog parks, pet stores, or doggie daycare. Keep them home and away from sick dogs if you can. The same holds true if your dog is exhibiting a cough-keep them home to help prevent spread to other dogs.

To prevent the spread of disease, wash your hands +/- use a disinfecting sanitizer after contact with any dogs. Disinfectants such as bleach(1:30 solution) may be used for contaminated objects.

### **Vaccination**

There are 2 vaccinations available, H3N8 (older strain) and H3N2 (new strain). Its is unknown if H3N8 will provide much, if any, cross-protection against H3N2, though H3N8 is still prevalent in the U.S. These vaccinations are intended to reduce the severity and duration of the illness, which is the same intention for human flu vaccinations. This means the flu vaccinated dogs that become infected will develop less severe illness and are less likely to spread the virus to other dogs. Due to the prevalence of both viruses, it is recommended to get both strains of vaccines if your dog is at risk for being exposed. These vaccines are then repeated 3 weeks later to ensure the best possible immunity against natural exposure.