

Bordetella 101: Kennel cough and your dog

Overview

Kennel cough, or **tracheobronchitis**, is an infectious bronchitis that could be compared to a cold with a scratchy throat in people. The most common symptom of canine kennel cough is a harsh, hacking cough that sounds as if something is stuck in your dog's throat. While it may sound as if your dog could cough up a lung, in general, kennel cough isn't serious and it usually resolves on its own, just as the common cold does with people. Unfortunately for the concerned pet owner, this can take days to weeks. You will notice in most cases, despite the hacking cough, that your dog will want to eat, drink, and play normally.

This annoying cough is most commonly caused by highly contagious bacteria; in other cases, the cause can be viral. Dogs in highly populated situations such as boarding facilities, doggy day care, and dog parks are most likely to get kennel cough, which can be transmitted by air or by contact with infected surfaces. Puppies and younger dogs are at the greatest risk, but older dogs can also become infected.

Symptoms

The signs of kennel cough can vary greatly. The most common symptom is a hacking cough. It may sound as if your dog is trying to clear something from her throat. Sometimes the coughing causes retching or the vomiting of fluid, and is often worsened when your pooch becomes excited or active.

Additional symptoms can include:

- Irritated eyes
- Runny nose
- Dog Sneezing
- Loss of appetite
- Depression
- Fever
- Breathing difficulty

Diagnosis/Treatment

Many cases of kennel cough can be diagnosed with a complete physical exam and medical history. Your veterinarian will want to know if your dog has been exposed to other dogs recently. They may examine your dog's neck to see if it is sensitive, perhaps inducing a cough. In some situations, your veterinarian

may recommend other diagnostics to rule out other diseases. These could include blood tests and x-rays.

Treatment of kennel cough depends on the severity and cause. Your veterinarian may prescribe a cough suppressant to help control the cough. In some cases, antibiotics are prescribed, as well.

Prevention

There are several things you can do to help prevent your four-legged friend from getting kennel cough. Especially when he is young, limit your pet's exposure to other dogs of unknown vaccine history; this will help keep him free of many diseases, not just kennel cough. You should strongly consider vaccinating your dog for kennel cough, especially if you plan on bringing him to doggy day care or boarding her at any point. The vaccine has proven to be safe and effective, and your veterinarian will recommend the right vaccine protocol for your pet.

If you have any questions or concerns, you should always visit or call your veterinarian – they are your best resource to ensure the health and well-being of your pets.