

# Bronchitis in Dogs

## Help your canine friend breathe easy

### Overview

If your dog coughs like a smoker but you know it's not from a pack-a-day habit, he could be suffering from chronic bronchitis.

Chronic bronchitis is the result when the tubes that pass air from the trachea to the lungs become inflamed; it impacts the entire respiratory system and can have serious consequences if left untreated.

### Risk

Chronic bronchitis is most common in small and medium-sized breeds, and both genders are equally at risk for it. Dogs that are overweight may have increased breathing problems.

### Symptoms

What should you watch for if you suspect your four-legged friend has chronic bronchitis?

- [Coughing](#)
- Rapid rate of breathing
- [Difficulty breathing](#)
- Shortness of breath
- [Gagging](#) or retching
- Wheezing
- [Anorexia](#)
- Listlessness
- [Fever](#)

### Diagnosis

Your veterinarian will give your pet a very thorough physical exam, including carefully listening to his heart and lungs. In most cases of chronic bronchitis, the heart sounds normal and the lungs sound abnormal. In some cases, your veterinarian can cause your dog to cough just by examining his throat.

Be sure to provide your veterinarian with a complete history of your dog, including any previous illnesses, medications, response to medications, appetite, weight loss, trouble exercising, frequency of coughing, and the presence of any new environmental factors in your dog's world, such as dust, smoke, or other inhalants.

If your veterinarian suspects chronic bronchitis, they may recommend a combination of the following tests:

- Chest x-rays to identify how much damage, if any, has been done to the trachea and lungs
- An examination of your dog's airway to rule out a blockage
- A cytology test (tracheal wash) to examine if an infection or cancer cells are present
- An electrocardiogram to see if your dog has an irregular heart rate and rhythm
- A complete blood count to rule out any blood abnormalities, like anemia, or evidence of inflammation
- A blood gas analysis to determine if the lungs are functioning properly to regulate blood oxygen and carbon dioxide levels
- A fecal test to rule out lungworms and other parasites
- A heartworm test to rule out [heartworm](#) infection

### Treatment

Once your dog is diagnosed with chronic bronchitis, your veterinarian will recommend a treatment regime that is tailored specifically to your best friend. A combination of in-clinic treatment and home care is usually the best way to combat canine bronchitis.

Treatment may include:

- Medications specific to your pet's condition, if warranted
- Reducing your dog's weight, if he is obese
- Dental treatment, if your dog has any dental issues or oral infections
- Reduction of any environmental factors that may irritate the bronchitis

Unfortunately, there is no cure for chronic bronchitis, but through diligent care you can help reduce the severity of your dog's symptoms by contacting your veterinarian right away if you suspect a problem.

### Prevention

While you can't prevent your dog from getting chronic bronchitis, you can help to lessen its effects. Watching

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your pet's weight and reducing the number of potential environmental irritants he is exposed to will go a long way in helping your favorite dog live a happy, healthy life!

*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.*