

Canine Influenza -- Talking Points for Staff

The following talking points may be helpful in responding to inquiries from clients regarding canine influenza.

What is canine influenza?

Canine influenza is a new, highly contagious respiratory disease that can mimic symptoms of "kennel cough" but is more serious and generally requires veterinary medical attention.

What precautions are you taking to protect my pet from this disease?

We closely monitor all of our patients for signs of respiratory disease and use contagious disease and isolation protocols to keep respiratory patients separate from other patients. Our stringent housekeeping practices also help reduce the likelihood of transmission.

If my pet shows signs of the disease, what can you do to help him?

While there is no cure for canine influenza, your dog will be given supportive therapy and monitored closely for secondary infections, such as nasal discharge, which can be treated with antibiotics.

How prevalent is this disease?

Canine influenza is a highly infectious disease -- virtually all dogs exposed to the virus will develop the disease. Cases have been reported throughout the U.S. as well as Canada.

What is the mortality rate?

Canine influenza has a very low mortality rate. Only between one and eight percent of all cases result in death.

Can canine influenza be transferred to humans?

There are no known cases of canine influenza in humans.

Should I continue to take my dog to the groomer, doggie day care, dog park, boarding facility, etc.?

This is a decision you need to make individually, balancing your needs and those of your animal with the potential risk. You may consider taking a few extra precautions to ensure your dog's health. For example, a vaccine is available to protect high risk patients against canine influenza. Use boarding kennels, grooming facilities and dog parks that are well known to you. Be alert to news of any influenza outbreaks in your area.

Call facilities in advance to ask about any recent occurrences of respiratory illnesses in dogs. If your dog has a respiratory infection or has recently recovered from a respiratory infection, keep him at home for a couple of weeks to allow a complete recovery and reduce the likelihood of transmission to other dogs.

Is there a vaccine for canine influenza?

Yes. While we do not actively promote the vaccine (primarily because both the disease and vaccine are relatively new), we do carry it for high risk patients or for dogs that need to be boarded at a kennel facility that requires the vaccine.