

What is kennel Cough?

Canine infectious tracheobronchitis (kennel cough) is one of the most common infectious diseases in dogs. Fortunately, the majority of cases are not serious, resolving on their own in 1 to 2 weeks. The main cause of kennel cough is the airborne bacteria, *Bordetella bronchiseptica*. A dog with kennel Cough will develop a coarse, dry, hacking cough about 5 to 10 days after being infected. It sounds as if the dog needs to “clear its throat” and the cough will be triggered by any extra activity, drinking water exposed to change of temperature or exercise. Many dogs that acquire Kennel Cough will cough every few minutes, all day long. They will wretch and sometimes vomit a white foamy looking matter. Their general state of health and alertness are usually not affected, they usually have no rise in temperature, and do not lose their appetite.

Even in the most hygienic, well ventilated, spacious dog facilities, the possibility of a dog acquiring Kennel Cough still exists. Kennel Cough can be acquired from your neighbor’s dog, from a Champion Show Dog at a Dog Show, from the animal hospital where your dog just came in for treatment of a cut paw, from the sidewalk where an infected dog walked earlier... Try not to blame anyone or any place if your dog develops Kennel Cough. There may have been an infected dog unknown to anyone that acted as a source for other dogs. The signs of Kennel Cough usually will last from 7 to 21 days and can be very annoying for the dog and the dog’s owners. If you suspect your dog has Kennel Cough, isolate your dog and visit your veterinarian for medical advice. First and foremost, isolate your dog. Do not take your dog to public places in order to prevent the spread of infection. If your dog has recently been to dog school, boarding or any other place where your dog was exposed to other dogs, notify the correct individuals and advise that your dog is coughing.

You do not need to isolate your dog to prevent infection. The best recommendation is to discuss with your veterinarian what combination of vaccines and boosters they recommend. Many dogs that contract Kennel Cough will display only minor signs of coughing that may last 7 to 10 days and will not require any medication at all. Treatment is generally limited to symptomatic relief of the coughing with non prescription, and occasionally prescription, cough suppressants. If the dog is running a fever or there seems to be a persistent and severe cough, antibiotics are occasionally utilized to assist in the dog recovering from Kennel Cough. It can happen that the secondary bacterial invaders will complicate a case of Kennel Cough and prolong the recovery and severely affect the upper airway. Therefore the use of antibiotics is determined on an individual basis. Follow the advice and course of treatment that your veterinarian has prescribed. Don’t allow your dog to exercise as this will trigger cough.

We do not want any dogs to get sick; we want them to have fun! Our staff is always looking for signs of illness and every boarding dog has two health checks daily. All facilities get Kennel Cough from time to time. Colds go around just like in child daycare. The hard part for us is that a fully vaccinated dog can still get a cold and they won’t show symptoms until 5 to 10 days later. An infected dog can even give the cold to others and never have symptoms themselves. To minimize outbreaks, we clean and scrub everything constantly, we also have air purification systems. We don’t let any dog into the center unless they have their vaccinations. Outbreaks are usually once or twice a year and just a few dogs. Would you isolate your child to prevent a cold? No, socialization and schooling is just as important for our dogs as our children.