



CANINE INFLUENZA

City of Los Angeles ♦ L.A. Animal Services

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WHAT IS CANINE INFLUENZA (Canine Flu) ?

Canine influenza is a new virus that causes a respiratory infection in dogs and is highly contagious. It is believed to have jumped species from horses to racing dogs in Florida sometime in the last few years, and gradually spread out to dogs around the United States, including Southern California.

HOW DO DOGS BECOME INFECTED?

Canine influenza spreads most easily where numbers of dogs are kept in close proximity but could also be passed "on the street" or in kennels. It has been reported that kennel workers have carried the virus home with them and infected other dogs.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS?

The symptoms can look a lot like the common disease "kennel cough," because coughing is the most common symptom. However, dogs with canine influenza are usually sick for a longer period (weeks), and are more likely to have a fever and nasal discharge, and to develop pneumonia. Most dogs develop the milder form of the disease (cough, mild fever). Some require hospitalization and intensive care.

WHICH DOGS ARE SUSCEPTIBLE TO THE VIRUS?

Because this is a newly emerging pathogen, all dogs, regardless of breed or age, are susceptible to infection and have no naturally acquired or vaccine-induced immunity. Virtually 100 percent of exposed dogs become infected. Nearly 80 percent have clinical signs. There are two general clinical syndromes – the milder syndrome and a more severe pneumonia syndrome. The milder disease syndrome occurs in most dogs.

INCUBATION OR SHEDDING PERIOD?

The incubation period is two to five days after exposure before clinical signs appear. Infected dogs may shed virus for seven to 10 days from the initial day of clinical signs. Nearly 20 percent of infected dogs will not display clinical signs and become the silent shedders and spreaders of the infection.

HOW CAN CANINE INFLUENZA BE PREVENTED?

There is no vaccine for canine influenza virus at this time. This virus is spread by aerosolized respiratory secretions, contaminated inanimate objects and even by people moving back and forth between infected and uninfected dogs. This is an enveloped virus that is most likely killed by routine disinfectants, such as quaternary ammoniums and 10 percent bleach.

This information sheet is for general information only. It is not intended to provide individual veterinary advice or diagnosis. Consult your private veterinarian for examination, diagnosis, and treatment recommendations for your companion animal's health and behavior. Acting on any information that is provided here without first consulting your private veterinarian, is solely at the reader's risk.

Sources: CDC Media Relations and AVMA

For further information, please contact your local veterinarian.

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