

## KENNEL COUGH

Kennel cough, technically known as infectious tracheobronchitis, is an acute and highly contagious disease in dogs. Dogs most at risk are puppies, older dogs, and toy breeds. However, any dog that comes in contact with other dogs is at risk. Outbreaks of kennel cough at off leash parks, boarding facilities, obedience classes, and grooming parlors are common and may expose dozens of dogs at a time.

Symptoms of kennel cough include severe coughing spells sometimes followed by vomiting and gagging. The cough is typically described as a dry hacking cough that is worse when pressure is put on the throat. The dog may also have watery eyes and/or a nasal discharge. Severely infected dogs may also be feverish and have a loss of appetite. In rare cases, pneumonia may develop secondary to kennel cough infection.

There are several organisms that can cause kennel cough (just as there are numerous organisms that cause human “flu”.) The most common organisms are Bordetella, Canine Parainfluenza, and Canine Adenovirus. These are the organisms included in the Bordetella vaccines. Vaccines for kennel cough can be given by injection or as nose drops. The intranasal vaccine is most commonly used because it is believed to provide the best protection against the disease. Currently, we recommend vaccinating all puppies for kennel cough as part of their puppy vaccination series. Booster vaccinations are recommended in adult animals that board at kennels or have frequent contact with other dogs. These boosters are given yearly.

Treatment for kennel cough depends on the severity of the symptoms and age and health of the pet and may include rest, antibiotics, and cough suppressants. Give all medication as directed. Some cough suppressants may make your dog slightly drowsy. If your dog’s appetite is decreased, try warming the food and hand feeding. Offer your dog plenty of clean water. If your dog’s condition worsens or he or she fails to improve after 10 to 14 days, please call the clinic. Affected dogs should not have contact with other dogs until all symptoms are gone. Do not take your dog for walks or attend obedience classes until he or she is well. If your pet has had contact with other dogs since the symptoms began, we recommend letting the other dog’s owners know that your pet has been diagnosed with kennel cough so that they can watch their pet carefully for symptoms.