

## **Canine Influenza**

### **What is canine influenza (dog flu)?**

Dog flu is a contagious respiratory disease in dogs caused by a specific Type A Influenza virus. It was originally an equine (horse) influenza virus, but has spread to dogs and can now be spread between dogs. There is no evidence that this virus infects humans.

### **What are the symptoms of this infection in dogs?**

The symptoms of this illness in dogs are cough, runny nose, and fever. A small proportion of dogs can develop severe disease. It cannot be distinguished from other types of respiratory infection by symptoms alone. Tests are done to diagnose influenza, which includes a nasal swab.

### **How does canine influenza spread?**

Canine influenza can be spread by direct contact with respiratory secretions from infected dogs, through the air via a cough or sneeze, and by contact with contaminated objects. Dogs showing signs of respiratory disease should not be exposed to the other dogs. Clothing, equipment, surfaces, and hands should be cleaned and disinfected after exposure to dogs showing signs. Influenza has been found at daycare centers, veterinary clinics, dog tracks, and other facilities in Florida, Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Colorado, California, Delaware, and elsewhere. Cases have been identified in 30 states and the District of Columbia.

### **How is canine influenza treated?**

Not all canines with CIV require therapeutic intervention. Therapy relies mainly on supportive care while the viral infection runs its course. Antibiotics are indicated for dogs with secondary bacterial infections evidenced by fever, productive cough, purulent nasal discharge, or pneumonia.

### **Is there a vaccine for canine influenza?**

Canine Influenza vaccine, H3N8, the first vaccine for canine influenza virus (CIV), was granted a conditional license by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) on May 27, 2009, for use by veterinarians in the United States. The vaccine gives veterinarians one more tool in providing their canine patients with more comprehensive respiratory protection. In addition to canine influenza, there are other causes of canine cough, such as Bordetella, or kennel cough. The risk factors are the same for both diseases-close contact and close environments. In addition, kennel cough and CIV are difficult to differentiate in early stages because initial symptoms are similar and diagnostic confirmation of CIV can take up to 2 weeks.