

FACT SHEET: KENNEL COUGH

What is Kennel Cough?

Kennel Cough is a fairly common and highly contagious respiratory disease in dogs, and is similar to the common cold in humans. Dogs can catch Kennel Cough in several ways. It can spread through aerosols in the air, directly from dog to dog, or through germs on contaminated objects. Kennel Cough is often spread in enclosed areas such as boarding facilities, animal shelters, training classes or dog grooming facilities. Your pet might even catch it from sharing a water dish. Kennel Cough is rarely fatal, and usually resolves in one to three weeks. Treatment generally consists of supportive care. Viral infections are not cured by antibiotics - as with the common cold. There is no completely effective treatment aside from time to allow the dog's immune system to do its job.

Can my other pets get Kennel Cough?

Kennel Cough is contagious to other dogs. Most dogs are vaccinated against it (it is part of the standard yearly vaccination program recommended by most vets.) However, the vaccine is not 100% protective, so it is a good idea to isolate dogs that are showing signs of the disease, and wash hands after handling sick dogs.

What are the signs of Kennel Cough?

- Sneezing
- Fever
- Red and/or runny eyes
- Runny nose
- Persistent dry cough with a "honking" sound
- Decreased energy
- Decreased appetite

What should I do if my new dog has Kennel Cough?

Dogs may leave the shelter with no outward symptoms, but then develop them within a few days at their new home. Even dogs that have recently been treated for Kennel Cough can relapse, so we recommend sequestering new dogs from any current resident dogs for 7-10 days. We offer you a few options for post-adoption veterinary care: a certificate for a free vet exam that you can use at participating local clinics, or a separate follow-up certificate you can use at VCA Animal Hospitals that will cover up to \$250 of certain shelter-related illness. We also offer a 30-day free trial of pet insurance through PetFirst.

Mild cases of Kennel Cough can be treated at home with supportive care.

- Supportive care is very important-make sure you dog is eating and drinking
- Dogs with Kennel Cough should be isolated from other dogs
- A humidifier or vaporizer can provide some relief. You can also allow your dog in the bathroom while you shower. The steam will help soothe any irritated breathing passages
- Any medication prescribed should be taken as directed by your vet
- If you have any questions contact your veterinarian