

INFECTIOUS TRACHEOBRONCHITIS



'Canine Cough'

Overview:

Contagious upper respiratory infections in dogs are termed 'canine cough,' primarily a tracheobronchitis (trachea = windpipe; bronchi = small airway branches in the lungs). Causes, transmission and risk factors are quite similar to the human cold/flu. The main difference is that 'canine cough' routinely results more in a deep throaty cough and less in signs of 'head cold.' The cough is often confused by owners as their dog having something stuck in their throat.

Cause:

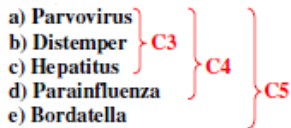
Canine Cough is caused primarily by two agents:

- 1) Bordetella Bronchiseptica (a bacteria)
- 2) Parainfluenza Virus (a virus)

Also note that other viruses and bacteria can cause upper respiratory tract infection in dogs.

Vaccinations:

In Australian, routine vaccination in dogs can include;



Most vets routinely recommend and perform vaccination with C5 vaccine. This allows dog owners open access to grooming parlours, boarding kennels, doggy day cares, obedience training and travel. Most of these places require the C5 vaccination to be current prior to accepting your dog.

All areas of the dog industry are now accepting and enforcing full vaccination to protect your pet, other people's pets and the dog population in general from contagious vaccinatable diseases to the best extent possible.

Risk Factors:

Anywhere dogs congregate potentially increases the risk of transmission of canine cough. Individual dog risk is increased by a compromised immune system caused by a concurrent disease, chemotherapy, some drugs or stress.

Transmission:

Transmission is usually by direct contact between dogs (saliva) or via aerosol droplet spread. Transmission via human hands or clothes is also possible.

Treatment:

Due to the viral component of canine cough, there is no medication to treat the virus; however, just like a human virus you can help alleviate/mask the symptoms.

Treatment can also include antibiotics to prevent a secondary bronchitis or pneumonia infection and possibly dog cough medicine.

Nursing care includes keeping your dog warm and exercise minimal until after full recovery. As with any virus, it will need to run its course until the dogs' body can overcome it. This may mean a cough lasting anywhere from 3-4 days to 2-3 weeks.

The Pets Hotel:

The Pets Hotel is a five star boarding establishment. While the risk of your dog contracting a cough whilst boarding is inherently increased due to the congregation of dogs and possible stress associated with a new environment, The Pets Hotel takes the following steps to reduce the risk of the spread of canine cough;

- 1) all dogs require current C5 vaccination prior to entry
- 2) use of veterinary grade disinfectants daily
- 3) minimise cross contamination via staff through hygienic dog handling practices
- 4) vigilantly monitor and document all individual dogs
- 5) provide prompt treatment as required

Despite everyone's best efforts and because of the reasons outline above, occasional outbreaks of canine cough will occur.

CANINE COUGH MYTHS & FACTS

Myth – Since my dog had the Bordetella vaccine, he cannot get Canine Cough.

Fact – The Bordetella vaccine protects against one bacteria, Bordetella Bronchiseptica; however, there are a variety of other strains that can cause canine cough in dogs. So while the Bordetella vaccine may not prevent your dog from getting cough, it can prevent them from getting it very bad. The better protection your dog has from canine cough is actually an acquired immunity from having had it and successfully fighting it off. Unfortunately some dogs are more prone to acquiring cough than others.

Myth – If my dog got canine cough after boarding, it must mean the kennel is dirty, or did something wrong.

Fact – The spread of canine cough does not directly reflect the kennel's cleanliness. Canine Cough is an airborne disease, just like our common cold. It can spread up to 12 feet in every direction from a single cough. It is most commonly transmitted via nose-to-nose contact and shared airspace; which of course is unavoidable when there are many dogs are in social and enriching environments.

Therefore, even kennels who clean and disinfect very regularly cannot prevent dogs from breathing air. That said, the various viruses or bacteria that cause Canine Cough can lurk on doors, walls, water bowls, etc. So, routine cleaning and disinfecting will help stem the spread of the disease, although it won't stop it completely from spreading.

Myth – All dogs with Canine Cough must be treated with antibiotics.

Fact – Antibiotics will not shorten the duration of the virus.

Most of the time, Canine Cough goes away on its own. Just like our common cold; most people are uncomfortable, manage the symptoms, and feel better in a week or so. However, some people have a cold that turns into something more complicated. While most dogs cough for a week and get better, some can't seem to quite get over it and develop a secondary infection which then requires antibiotics.

If your dog has a fever, is very young, very old, a short-muzzled breed or has other complicating factors, antibiotics may be needed. This is a decision for your veterinarian to make on a case-by-case basis.