



Always consult with a veterinarian that you feel comfortable with before diagnosing or treating any disease on your own. This information is for reference only.

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Kennel Cough

Issue Description

Is a highly contagious canine illness characterized by inflammation of the upper respiratory system. It can be caused by viral infections such as canine distemper, canine adenovirus, canine parainfluenza virus, or canine respiratory coronavirus, or bacterial infections such as Bordetella bronchiseptica. It is so named because the infection can spread quickly among dogs, such as in the close quarters of a kennel.

Both viral and bacterial causes of kennel cough are spread through the air by infected dogs sneezing and coughing. It can also spread through contact with contaminated surfaces and through direct contact. It is highly contagious, even days or weeks after symptoms disappear. Symptoms begin usually 3 to 5 days after exposure. The disease can progress to pneumonia.

Other Names

Tracheobronchitis

Symptoms

Symptoms can include a harsh, dry hacking/coughing, retching, sneezing, snorting, gagging or vomiting in response to light pressing of the trachea or after excitement or exercise. The presence of a fever varies from case to case. The disease can last initially from 10-20 days and can rebreak when the dog is put into a stressful situation which puts stress on the dog's immune system. Diagnosis is made by seeing these symptoms, having a history of exposure is also helpful but not always found as kennel cough is easily spread through contact with contaminated surfaces such as the ground, toys, sidewalks, dog parks.

Treatment and prevention

Antibiotics are given to treat any bacterial infection present. Cough suppressants are used if the cough is not productive (nothing is being coughed up). The prognosis is good. Prevention is by vaccinating for canine adenovirus, distemper, parainfluenza, and Bordetella. In kennels, the best prevention is to keep all the cages disinfected. Most kennels will not board dogs without proof of vaccination.

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