



Always About Pets LLC

Grooming, Boarding, In Home Pet Care

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What you should know about

Kennel Cough

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 - Distemper or Kennel Cough?
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What is Kennel Cough?

In basic terms, Kennel Cough is an infectious respiratory disease. It is similar to a chest cold in humans, but highly contagious. The infection locates itself in the windpipe and bronchial tubes.

How is it contracted?

Kennel Cough is transmitted via the infected dog by 'spraying' the virus, or bacteria, into the air and another dog inhaling it.

It is not certain how long the virus remains on surfaces. That is why it is important for pet care facilities to routinely wipe down surfaces that multiple dogs come into contact with.

What are the symptoms?

- A dry hacking cough, as if trying to clear it's throat.
- Coughing up white, or clear, fleem
- Dry heaving
- Thin, runny nasal discharge

In older dogs, or those with a compromised immune system, the dog may become lethargic and run a fever. These dogs are at a greater risk for the infection to progress into pneumonia.

Distemper or Kennel Cough?

While Distemper does start in the respiratory system, unlike Kennel Cough, it progresses into the gastrointestinal and nervous systems, and the conjunctival membranes in the eyes.

In addition to the Kennel Cough symptoms above, Distemper presents with the following:

- Thick, yellow discharge for nose and eyes
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Dog symptoms will progress rapidly

Kennel Cough incubation period?

After infection occurs, it will take about 3 to 7 days for symptoms to present themselves. Until symptoms appear, your dog is still highly contagious. That's what makes the infection so hard to contain. By the time the symptoms appear, any dog they've come into contact with have been exposed.

Is Kennel Cough deadly?

The idea that Kennel Cough is death sentence is a myth. The myth stems from rescue shelters euthanizing infected dogs. This decision, however, is based solely on budget and space and not medical necessity.

In uncomplicated cases, kennel cough runs a course of a week or two and entails frequent fits of coughing. Otherwise, the dog feels active and normal. In complicated cases, it can progress to life-threatening pneumonia.

Can other animals and humans contract it?

Cats, rabbits, pigs, etc can contract it, but rarely. Whether or not it can be passed to humans is debatable. There is not enough evidence at this time.

When to see a Vet?

If your dog's symptoms persist more than week, or your dog has any of these other symptoms present, take your dog the vet immediately:

- Thick, yellow discharge for nose and eyes
- Rapid Respiration
- Fever
- Loss of appetite
- Lethargy
- If your dog is regularly around other dogs

You know your dog best, if you suspect something is wrong, take your dog to the Vet !

How is it treated and the duration?

Like the human cold, Kennel Cough has to run its course. Cough suppressants and antibiotics can be prescribed to make the dog comfortable and speed up recovery time.

Typically symptoms resolve in 7-10 days, but can last up to 3 weeks. However, your dog can remain contagious for up to 3 months.

Can it be contracted more the once?

Yes. Just as humans can contract the flu, or a cold more than once, so can a dog get Kennel Cough more than once.

Doesn't the Bordetella Vaccine protect my dog?

Like the human 'flu shot', Bordetella will certainly lower the risk of contracting the infection, but it will not completely prevent it. Just as there are different 'strains' of human flu that the 'flu shot' will not protect against, there are different 'strains' of 'Kennel Cough' that Bordetella will not protect against. That's why it is important that, if your dog is constantly around other dogs, to consider vaccinating every 6 months instead of just annually.

Bordetella Vaccine: Shot vs nasal injection?

It's all in the timing ... Nasal vaccines offer protection in 4 days, while the shot isn't effective for 7 days.

WARNING !!! If you are one of those owners that vaccinate the day before kenneling, your dog is NOT protected!

Get your vaccinations early!

Can my Boarding facility prevent my dog from catching Kennel Cough?

While the spread of Kennel Cough can be minimized by proper cleaning, isolation of sick animals and proper ventilation, no amount of supervision, sanitation or personalized care is guaranteed to be 100% effective against the infection.

The big problem lies with the fact that a dog may be carrier of the infection, yet display no symptoms for up to a week, and can remain contagious for up to 3 months after symptoms subside. Since the average Boarding stay is 4 to 7 days, a Boarding facility may be boarding an infected dog with no knowledge to the facility or the owner.

What is Always About Pets doing to Prevent Kennel Cough outbreaks?

No Kennel is immune to Kennel Cough, but we can take precautions

- Boarding area is disinfected 3 times a day
- Bordetella vaccine is a requirement to board with us

- Grooming dogs are kept in separate area from the Boarding dogs
- Excrement is removed and disposed of immediately upon defecation.
- Dogs showing signs of illness are
 - * immediately isolated (if space is available)
 - * immediately taken to vet for examination and to be put on medication(s) Owner is notified
 - * walked in separate area
- Boarding area is regularly ventilated with fresh air

.... Please refer to #11 and #12 of our Boarding Service Agreement