

Canine Influenza

What is it?

Canine influenza is currently caused by two main canine influenza virus strains, H3N8 and H3N2. Influenza viruses can cause canine infectious respiratory disease complex (CIRD) and dogs that are infected will spread the virus whether or not they appear to be sick.

How is it spread?

It is highly contagious. Influenza transmission can occur from direct contact with an infected dog or with its secretions and the virus can persist on toys, bowls, collars, leashes, floors, and walls for several days.

The CIV Strains Explained

Recently an avian strain of the influenza virus mutated to one that infects dogs. This is the CIV H3N2 virus.

Similar to human influenza, when a new strain is discovered, then a new vaccine is needed and there will be no protection from previous vaccinations. The canine influenza vaccines given to your dog before 2016 were for the H3N8 variant.

Over the past two years, the H3N8 variant has become less active and there have been no reported new cases in our region. The new flu strain H3N2 has been reported in multiple states, but there has been no outbreak in our region yet, however flu can spread rapidly.

Canine influenza vaccines can reduce the chance of infection for their specific strain, should reduce the clinical signs if a dog does become infected, and can decrease the time that a dog remains "infective" to other dogs.

Both canine influenza strains are being monitored and depending on future mutations or development we will recommend vaccine adjustments as needed.



What if your dog is sick?

If your dog has symptoms, contact your veterinarian for an appointment and let them know your dog has respiratory signs. When you arrive for your appointment either call or leave your dog in the car to help minimize the possibility of contamination in the facility.

Symptoms of Canine Influenza

- Fever
- Lethargy
- Coughing
- Gagging
- Hacking
- Nasal discharge



Canine Influenza Vaccines

Learning from the previous influenza outbreak and the current spread of the new influenza, we are recommending getting your dog vaccinated for the H3N2 canine influenza vaccine *if* you take your dog to any place where dogs unknown to you gather in large numbers.

Areas that we recommend vaccinating for are:

- boarding kennels
- dog shows
- dog parks
- performance competitions
- group training classes
- doggie daycare
- groomers

We also recommend the vaccine if your dog has a medical condition that increases complications with respiratory diseases or suppresses the immune system (ie-cancer, cardiac disease, corticosteroid use, etc). The H3N2 canine influenza vaccine requires an initial 2 vaccine series given 3-4 weeks apart and a yearly booster to maintain effectiveness. If you think your dog is at risk, talk to your veterinarian about vaccination.

For more information about canine influenza, please visit the American Veterinary Medical Association at www.avma.org