



What dog owners need to know about Canine Flu

Do you board your dog, have your dog professionally groomed, take your dog to daycare, a park, or training classes? Does your dog travel with you? If you answer yes to any of the previous questions then your dog would benefit from Canine Influenza Virus (CIV) vaccines.

This month there have been several positive cases of CIV from a kennel in Washington State (Seattle area), and more recently, a positive case here in Montana (Helena). Just like the Flu viruses that trouble people, the Canine Flu has more than one strain. The newer strain of CIV the H3N2 is the culprit in both Seattle and Helena.

Once the viruses are in an area, the chances of these diseases spreading are extremely high. CIV is a relatively new virus, and dogs have no natural immunity to it. It is spread by direct contact of dogs- (when they lick or nuzzle each other), from droplets in the air when they cough or sneeze, and from objects and people that have been exposed. Up to 80% of infected dogs will develop a mild form of CIV (runny nose, cough, fever), while 20% will show no clinical signs but will still be highly contagious, and 10-20% of infected dogs will develop a more severe form that can lead to pneumonia, and/or additional complications. When the first CIV vaccine (H3N8) became available in May 2009, the disease had been confirmed in 30 states; as of October 2015 the number has increased to 41. With the latest outbreak in Seattle and Helena the newer strain (H3N2) has now been confirmed in 27 states.

The CIV vaccines are recommended for any dog that gets the Bordetella (kennel cough) vaccine on a yearly basis- Dogs that travel, board, go to the dog park, visit with other dogs, run on the trails, or take training courses are at risk of exposure. Like any other vaccine is not going to prevent your dog from getting the Influenza Virus but will greatly lessen the severity and length of this virus. For more information you can visit www.doginfluenza.com.

As your Veterinary Team, we want to make sure that you are informed of the risks to your pet, and that you are aware of the vaccines available if you feel the risk applies to your dog. As with all of our vaccine protocols we feel the best medicine is to tailor vaccination protocols to meet the needs of our patients. We are offering the information to our clients so that they can make an informed choice as to whether or not they want to vaccinate. b

If your pet exhibits symptoms of coughing, sneezing, nasal discharge, or a fever, please keep your dog at home (limit their exposure to other dogs) and call us right away.

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