

Dauphin - Ste Rose



Veterinary Clinic

Canine Infectious Tracheobronchitis:

Kennel Cough

Coughing dogs: Is it Kennel cough or what?: There are lots of reports right now of outbreaks of kennel cough but what is really happening?

Canine infectious tracheobronchitis, or "kennel cough" is a highly contagious, acute disease that targets the airways. What we see is a sudden onset of a severe cough, often a "goose-honking" cough that is made worse by exercise, excitement or pressure on the neck from a collar.

Sometimes there will also be gagging, retching or nasal discharge. Dogs that are at the greatest risk of getting sick, are dogs that have recently been to a boarding kennel, dog shows, dog park, obedience classes or really anywhere they have been in contact with other dogs. Dogs at the least risk are those that stay home and have no contact with other dogs. Most dogs recover on their own with no treatment, just rest. Much less commonly, some dogs will develop complications and may develop pneumonia and become quite ill.

There are at least 12 different infectious agents (viruses or bacteria) that can cause this disease. If your dog is fully vaccinated, including the Kennel cough vaccine, they are only given protection to 4 of these agents. That leaves your dog with no real protection against two-thirds of the potential agents. Also, it is important to remember that while vaccines are VERY effective in protecting your pet, they are not 100% protective. In most cases, vaccines can not completely protect against infection but they help to minimize the degree of illness and help your pet recover much faster than if they were not protected. It is very important to keep your dog up to date on vaccinations. Kennel cough vaccine is only effective for "up to" a

year so if your dog is going to the kennel or show or other high risk area, and it has been 10-11 months since vaccination, you will want to booster them 10 days before the high risk activity. If you have questions, please have a conversation with your veterinarian.

Complicate this further: cough can be caused by other things as well such as heart failure, irritants in the air (like all the smoke in the air this summer), allergies and even chronic barking.

In conversation with the Vet Lab, there has been NO testing done to determine if indeed there is an outbreak of a particular virus or bacteria causing "kennel cough" so nothing can be proven. There is a test that can be done to determine what is making your dog sick. The limiting factor is the cost because it is about \$200 to do the testing.

Generally, pets that have uncomplicated kennel cough will recover completely. Basic care is all you need, like resting and minimizing exercise, making sure they are eating and drinking and keeping them away from other dogs for a couple of weeks to make sure they are ok. If you are concerned, then please contact your veterinarian for advice.