

CLIENT HANDOUT:

Canine Infectious Respiratory Diseases



This handout will help introduce you to some of the terms, signs, prevention and treatments of canine infectious respiratory diseases.

What are canine infectious respiratory diseases?

Canine infectious respiratory diseases may be caused by infection from one or more agents contained within the infectious respiratory disease complex. The agents may be of viral and/or bacterial in origin and a few are listed below:

Canine Influenza Virus

There are two known strains of canine influenza viruses. Dogs are rarely immune without vaccination. The vast majority of dogs exposed to either strain become infected and nearly 80 percent develop some types of clinical signs.

Bordetella bronchiseptica

This bacterium has been commonly associated with kennel cough and may be found as a co-infecting organism in dogs with viral infections. A vaccine is available and may be required for some boarding kennels.

Additional viral and bacterial agents:

There are multiple other viruses (*e.g.*, parainfluenza virus, adenovirus, distemper) and bacterial species (*e.g.*, *Mycoplasma*, *Pasteurella*) that may be involved in canine respiratory diseases and outbreaks.



What are the signs of canine infectious respiratory diseases?

Affected dogs may show signs of sneezing, coughing, runny eyes or nose, lethargy and loss of appetite. In more severe cases, dogs may develop pneumonia, which can be fatal. Signs of pneumonia may include fast or difficult breathing, worsening cough and even collapse. Single agent infections and co-infections with multiple agents can present with very similar signs. Specific diagnostic tests are necessary to identify particular viruses or bacteria. Call your veterinarian about any new signs you're seeing.

Is canine influenza or other respiratory agents contagious to me or my other family members?

Both influenza viral strains are highly contagious between dogs, and with any influenza virus, new infections and strains are always possible. Certain respiratory bacteria (*e.g.*, *Bordetella bronchiseptica*) have been shown to infect people, and those with compromised immune systems are most at risk. Contact your family health care provider with any questions or concerns.

What should I do if my pet may have been exposed to a contagious respiratory illness?

Watch for the signs listed above. If possible, minimize your pet's exposure to other dogs. This helps to keep your pet safe from other dogs and also helps protect other pets in case your dog may be inadvertently spreading disease. Remember that your veterinarian is the best source for information.

For additional information, please contact your veterinary medical team.

How will the doctor diagnose and treat my pet for infectious respiratory disease?

Currently, there is no immediate / in-hospital test for the diagnosis of many respiratory diseases in dogs. This means that test results may take days or weeks to return. Your doctor will discuss diagnostic options for your pet (testing may be performed on blood or respiratory tract samples). Your doctor may decide to begin treatment before test results are returned. Additional testing could include radiographs (chest X-rays) and referral for advanced testing and treatment may be discussed. Pets with more severe illness may require prolonged hospitalization, oxygen and intravenous fluid therapy or antibiotics. Remember, coughing is associated with a variety of diseases or conditions and your Banfield doctor is best qualified to make the specific diagnosis.

Are there vaccines to help protect against infectious respiratory disease?

There are currently multiple vaccines available for respiratory disease caused by *Bordetella*, parainfluenza, distemper and canine influenza. Vaccines may be administered by injection, intranasal drop or orally.

As is the case with any vaccine, vaccination cannot prevent all infections from occurring. However, if vaccinated dogs do contract disease, they are less likely to suffer severe, debilitating or sometimes, deadly consequences of infection.

It is recommended to protect your dog with the vaccine schedule recommended by your Banfield doctor. Talk to your veterinarian to help determine your dog's risk for infectious respiratory disease and to review all respiratory vaccinations that are available.

What can I do to protect the entire family?

If your doctor suspects your pet has a highly contagious disease of any kind, it is likely that he or she will recommend keeping your pet in an isolated area away from other pets. As always, practice good hygiene for your pet and family. Family members should wash exposed areas of skin after petting and playing with pets. Be extra careful with family members who may have compromised immune systems. Canine influenza in particular is highly contagious between dogs, so be aware of other dogs your pets play with and where they play. In times of disease outbreak, minimize your dog's contact with other dogs. Like kennel cough, this disease is more common in boarding facilities, dog parks, and other areas that dogs gather and have extensive contact.

Kennel items, bedding, toys and dishes should be frequently cleaned and disinfected as the influenza virus can remain infective up to 48 hours on surfaces. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your Banfield hospital.

Suggested links and further reading:

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/canine/index.htm>

<https://www.avma.org/public/PetCare/Pages/CanineInfluenza.aspx>

For additional information, please contact your veterinary medical team.