

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT DOG FLU

You can get the flu but did you know your dog can as well? It's called canine influenza (CIV) – or dog flu – and cases of it have been popping up all over the country. In fact, canine influenza has impacted dogs in more than half the country – just since March 2015 – and new cases are being diagnosed every week. It's made dogs sick (some very ill) and six dogs have died as a result of CIV.



As a pet owner, here's what you need to know. There are two strains of canine influenza – H3N8 and H3N2. H3N8 has been around for several years but H3N2, an Asian strain of CIV, is brand new in the United States, which means dogs have not been exposed to it before and have no immunity.

A dog may have the CIV H3N2 for up to 24 days, which means the dog is contagious and spreading the disease throughout that time period. As a result, the infection can spread quickly among social dogs in inner cities, doggie daycares, boarding facilities, dog parks, sporting and show events and any location where dogs commingle. H3N2 is also incredibly contagious. It can be spread easily by direct contact with infected dogs (sniffing, licking, nuzzling), through the air (coughing, barking or sneezing, and by contact with contaminated objects such as dog bowls and clothing.

Protect Your Dog

- To prevent the spread of disease, wash your hands with soap and water or disinfect them with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer after contact with dogs.
- Dog owners whose dogs are coughing or showing other signs of respiratory disease should not participate in activities or bring their dogs to facilities where other dogs can be exposed to the virus.
- Consider vaccination against CIV based on your dog's lifestyle and risk factors. If you answer yes to one or more of the questions below, your dog is greater risk for contracting canine influenza.

Does your dog:

- Visit doggie day care?
- Board at a boarding facility or pet hotel?
- Attend training classes?
- Play at dog parks?
- Participate in dog-friendly events?
- Attend dog shows or sporting events?
- Often greet other dogs during walks?

Signs of CIV

Call your veterinarian immediately if your dog has the following symptoms:

- Coughing
- Discharge from the nose or eyes
- Loss of appetite
- Lethargy/lack of energy

If you'd like more information about canine influenza, please call our office. You also will find valuable pet owner information at doginfluenza.com.