

Canine Influenza News

There is a new disease that affects dogs. It is canine influenza or dog flu. Canine influenza developed about 2004 and has spread quickly in Florida and along the east coast. Since then it has spread to larger metropolitan areas in California, Nevada, Houston and suspect cases in the DFW metroplex.

All dogs are susceptible to this disease. As it is a new virus, all dogs are naïve and have no immunity against it. Any dogs that go to grooming parlors, bathing facilities, boarding facilities, dog parks or doggie day care facilities are more likely to have exposure. Newly adopted dogs are more likely to be a significant source of this virus which would expose all the dogs currently at home. The disease itself behaves similarly to the human flu virus in that it causes cold/flu type respiratory symptoms including nasal discharge, ocular discharge, fever and cough. It is highly contagious due to airborne transmission. It is difficult to tell the difference between flu and other respiratory diseases like kennel cough, Parainfluenza or Adenovirus which we already vaccinate for. Dogs which become infected may show no symptoms, minimal symptoms like lethargy, mild sneezing or low grade fever. However, some may develop severe pneumonia and require I.V. antibiotics and even oxygen therapy.

A vaccine to prevent Canine Influenza has recently been developed by Intervet-Schering Plough. It is a killed viral vaccine, similar to the injectable form humans receive. It does not cause flu-like symptoms and has minimal chance for side effects. First time vaccinates need a second booster two to four weeks later, then annually thereafter. Vaccinated dogs that get exposed to canine influenza may become infected but usually only show minimal symptoms and do not shed the virus to other dogs.

The doctors at LLAMC recommend dogs receive this vaccine series if they may be exposed to newly adopted dogs, boarding kennels, grooming/bathing parlors or doggie day care. We will require all dogs be vaccinated for canine influenza prior to boarding and bathing in the near future.

You can find out more about this through:

www.doginfluenza.com

www.avma.org/public_health/influenza/canine_bgnd.asp

www.aspc.org/pet-care/dog-care/dog-care-canine-flu-question-and-answer.html

Please call 214-350-5696 to schedule an appointment or if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Lon Hays, DVM, Barrett Jiranek, DVM

Andy Martin, DVM & Ryan Price, DVM