



What is Kennel Cough? Kennel cough is a fairly common ailment in dogs. People tend to associate it with dogs who have recently been boarded (or "kenned"). However, your dog could contract kennel cough anywhere they come into contact with other dogs; such as, the Groomer, the veterinarian's office, in dog obedience class, at a dog

show, dog parks, your neighbor's dogs or anywhere else. Any time your dog is in the vicinity of an infected dog, the potential exists for infection. Kennel cough is caused by an airborne virus, which is highly contagious. The incubation period is about 7-10 days, meaning dogs will not display symptoms of illness for about 7-10 days following exposure to the virus.

How do I prevent my dog from getting kennel cough? Vaccinating your dog with the Bordetella vaccine can help reduce their risk. However, be aware that your dog can still contract the Kennel Cough virus even if he or she has been vaccinated. There are many strains and mutations of the virus, making it a hit or miss whether the vaccine used on your dog will be the right one for the strain with which your dog comes in contact with. This is similar to the "flu shot" for people. Simply put, having the flu shot does not guarantee you won't get the flu and when your dog has a Bordetella vaccination it doesn't guarantee he or she won't get some milder form of kennel cough. A strong immune system is best defense against viruses. This is why several dogs could be exposed to the kennel cough virus but only one may actually contract it. It may be beneficial to provide your dog with immune boosting supplements on a regular basis. Check with your local pet store or veterinarian on supplements that will aid in boosting your dogs immune system.

What precautions are taken by Play N Stay Pet Camp to reduce risks, including Kennel Cough? Before admittance into our facility we require all dogs provide proof of vaccinations. If we observe a dog presenting Kennel Cough symptoms, they are isolated immediately to prevent further exposure to other dogs. Unfortunately, due to the 7-10 day incubation period, dogs may come into and leave our care before ever showing symptoms, exposing other dogs to the virus. In other cases, dogs who come frequently may never show symptoms. We track every illness carefully, so please let us know if your dog becomes symptomatic. To further assist, we play outside a lot during the day and provide good ventilation within our building. In addition, we use veterinary-quality disinfectant, capable of killing even the aids virus, as well as a state-of-the-art cleaning system to clean our facility. Unfortunately, Kennel Cough is one of the risks of dog socialization.

How do I know my dog has Kennel Cough? The most common symptom of Kennel Cough is a cough that sounds as if there is something stuck or caught in the dog's throat. One way you can "test" for Kennel Cough is to press the throat gently, right in the collar area. If the dog has Kennel Cough, this will probably trigger some coughing. Other triggers include, exercise, drinking water and change of temperature. Other symptoms could include sneezing and conjunctivitis. Most dogs with kennel cough will act normal except for the cough and will have a normal appetite. It is also important to note that the Bordetella vaccine can cause sneezing and coughing for several days, just as the flu shots will sometimes give humans flu symptoms.

What do I do if my dog gets Kennel Cough? Kennel cough generally will be gone in seven to ten days, but a residual cough can linger for as long as 3 weeks. In some cases an antibiotic is warranted. Contact your veterinarian for their recommended treatment plan. Please be sure to communicate openly with Play N Stay Pet Camp about any symptoms your dog is experiencing, prior to admission to daycare or camp.

MOST KENNEL COUGH WILL RESOLVE WITHOUT TREATMENT

BY ANDREAS. MULLEN, DVM

Kennel cough sounds worse than it is—in more ways than one. The name sounds like an ominous problem. And the cough itself has a deep honking and gagging that is often reported to veterinarians as: "My dog has a bone stuck in his throat." But dog owners can breathe easy, because with a little care and patience, these dogs can recover without lost sleep or big vet bills.

Kennel cough gets its name from the obvious problem of getting the condition during a kennel stay. It is most commonly associated with a bacterial infection, with 80-90% due to *Bordetella bronchiseptica*. This tiny but nasty bug can infect a dog's windpipe through contact with hands, clothing or air. It is most likely to effect dogs under stress.

Although the symptoms can occur in three to five days from the time of infection, some veterinarians report the actual coughing does not begin for seven to 10 days.

The Good News: Treatment is Probably Not Needed

Kennel cough is usually what veterinarians call "self-limiting." That's a fancy way of saying you probably don't need to take your dog to the vet. The problem will resolve all by itself in 10 days to three weeks. Although it is caused by a bacterium, antibiotics are generally not needed. Remember that the condition is contagious, so sick dogs should be isolated from other dogs.

Because most cases resolve by themselves within three weeks, your dog needs only to get some over-the-counter treatment for her cough (so you and she can sleep) and be separated from other uninfected dogs. Although the condition is contagious to other dogs, most cases cannot be spread to cats, humans or other non-canines.

Treatment is Easy

Most dogs with kennel cough will do fine without going to the vet. Try some Robitussin DM, a human cough suppressant available at any drug store. Use just 1 teaspoon per 20 pounds of dog. Don't overdo it—DM can be pretty strong stuff. Some vitamins can help speed recovery, especially Vitamin C. And remember to isolate the infected dog—they are contagious as long as they are sick. That's it. Good food, clean water and a loving home will help get them through, too.

What about vaccines for kennel cough?

There are two types of vaccines for kennel cough. One is given by injection; the other is sprayed into the nose. The injection provides for longer protection, but needs longer to take effect, usually 10 to 14 days. The nasal spray takes effect quicker, usually within four days, but it doesn't last as long. Unlike vaccines for viruses that can give immunity for years, these bacteria-fighting vaccines last only about six months. Although dogs who are vaccinated can still come down with kennel cough, it is usually less severe and shorter lasting than dogs who are not vaccinated at all.

When Do I Need to See a Vet?

Although kennel cough usually resolves by itself, if you see any of these symptoms, take your dog to the vet: Your dog does not want to eat. Your dog develops a runny nose WITH discolored discharge.