



Canine Influenza

Frequently Asked Questions

Is this a new disease?

Yes, in a sense it is. While the disease has only recently been identified in the canine population, it has the same genetic characteristics as an influenza virus found in horses. Because it is a “new” virus to dogs, they will not have immunity to the influenza virus. The virus that causes "dog flu" is different from the ones associated with human flu or avian flu.

Is canine flu really just kennel cough?

No, it is not. The most common cause of kennel cough is caused by a bacterium, *Bordetella bronchiseptica*. Canine influenza is caused by an influenza virus.

Where did it come from?

At this time, the exact origin is unknown. While originally seen in racing greyhounds in Florida, the virus has the same genetic characteristics as the influenza virus seen in horses.

Is it easily transmitted between dogs?

Yes, it appears that the virus is easily transmitted from dog-to-dog. The virus may be shed for 10 days after the onset of signs. Because the disease is new, it is unknown how widespread it is in the United States.

What are the signs of disease?

It is currently thought that about 80% of the dogs with the disease will develop a mild illness with signs including cough, low grade fever and nasal discharge.

A smaller percentage of dogs are likely to develop a more serious illness with signs including pneumonia and a high grade fever. A small percentage of dogs that develop severe pneumonia and other clinical complications may die from the disease.

Is there a vaccine available to prevent the disease?

Currently (October 2005), there is no vaccine on the market to protect dogs from infection with this virus. Flu vaccines approved for use in other species should not be used in an extra-label capacity on dogs

Does it cause disease in people or in other animals?

No, at this time transmission of the canine influenza virus from dogs to people or to other species of animals has not been shown. While a similar virus has been in the horse population for over 40 years, there is no evidence that the influenza virus in horses has been transmitted to people during that time.



NC STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE

Canine Influenza

Frequently Asked Questions



Other than vaccination what can be done to prevent the disease?

If canine influenza is diagnosed in your area, it would be wise to avoid unnecessary contact between your pet and other dogs. You and your dog should avoid contact with dogs showing signs of a respiratory illness.

What tests are available to diagnose the disease?

You should consult with your veterinarian if your pet develops a respiratory illness. Several laboratory tests are available to your veterinarian. If he or she suggests testing for canine influenza, it may be done by swabbing your dog's throat or by a blood test.

What steps should be taken to contain the disease if a dog is diagnosed with the disease?

If an animal has a respiratory illness with signs of disease compatible with the flu, it should be confined and kept away from other animals until at least 10 days after the onset of clinical signs of disease. People handling the animal should be aware that they should wash their hands and change clothes before having contact with other dogs.

While it has not been scientifically proven at this time, the virus is likely killed by routine disinfectants or a dilute solution of 10% bleach.

Where can I go for more information?

Florida Dept. of Agriculture & Consumer Services: <http://www.doacs.state.fl.us/ai/>

NCVMA: <http://www.ncvma.org/>

CDC: <http://www.cdc.gov/>

Cornell VDL: <http://www.diaglab.vet.cornell.edu/issues/civ.asp>

NCVDLS: <http://www.ncvdl.com/>



North Carolina Public Health
Working for a healthier and safer North Carolina
Everywhere. Everyday. Everybody.



Veterinary DIVISION

NC STATE UNIVERSITY

College of Veterinary Medicine

This publication was created to assist the clinical veterinarian in answering questions asked by their clients. Canine influenza is relatively new and our knowledge of the virus, its transmission and the treatment of the disease is changing rapidly. The information in this document is subject to change.

The document was created by the Veterinary Public Health Program (NC DHHS), Veterinary Division (NCDA&CS) and the College of Veterinary Medicine, North Carolina State University.

October 2005