

Canine Influenza Virus Notice

By Dr. Jerry Klein, Chief Veterinary Officer of AKC | May 31, 2017

This notice is being sent out to provide up-to-date and accurate information about the Canine Influenza Virus to help prevent the spread of the virus to healthy(unexposed) dogs. The information provided is not intended to alarm dog owners and handlers.



There are recently confirmed cases of the Canine Influenza Virus (H3N2 strain) that was first brought to and identified in Chicago, Illinois in the spring of 2015. The most recent outbreaks concern the following states: Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Missouri, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Texas.

Canine Influenza Virus is an extremely contagious airborne disease that is easily spread among dogs, and in rare instances, can be contagious to cats. If you believe one of your dogs may have contracted the Canine Influenza Virus, immediately isolate it from other animals and contact your veterinarian.

Here is some additional information about Canine Influenza Virus and tips for how to minimize the risk and reduce the spread of the disease:

Canine Influenza Virus

- Canine Influenza Virus is spread through:
- Close proximity to infected dogs (it is airborne and can travel up to 20 ft.)
- Contact with contaminated items (bowls, leashes, crates, tables, clothing, dog runs, etc.)
- People moving between infected and uninfected dogs
- 80% of all dogs that are exposed to the virus will contract it
- The virus lives up to 24 hours on soft surfaces and up to 48 hours on hard surfaces.
- Some exposed dogs will be subclinical carriers - meaning some dogs will contract and spread the virus without showing symptoms.
- Dogs show clinical signs within 24-48 hours and can shed the virus for up to 28 days from exposure.
- Most dogs will completely recover with proper treatment.
- Dogs that regularly interact with dogs outside of their own family or frequent places where many dogs gather are most susceptible to exposure to Canine Influenza Virus.

Symptoms

- Dry, hacking cough (similar to kennel cough)
- Lack of appetite
- Lethargy
- Discharge from the nose or eyes
- Fever (normal temperature is 101 – 102)

Prevention

- The best protection is vaccination. There is now a single vaccination for both the H3N2 and H3N8 strains of the virus. The vaccination requires a booster shot two weeks after the initial vaccine. Vaccination provides the best chance of immunity within 7-14 days of booster shot.
- Isolate sick animals and keep them isolated for up to 30 days after symptoms appear.
- Practice good sanitation. Use a bleach and water mixture diluted to 1-part bleach x 30 parts water to disinfect common areas such as tables, bowls, leashes, crates, etc. Allow items to thoroughly air dry for a minimum of 10 minutes before exposing dogs to them. Bleach breaks down quickly so solution should be made daily. Keep in mind that bleach becomes inactive in UV light. If mopping use two buckets so as not to cross contaminate areas

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- Wash your hands frequently, ideally between handling different dogs. At the very minimum, hand sanitizer should be used between handling dogs.
- Use disposable gowns or wipe down clothing and shoes with a bleach solution between dogs or after leaving an area where dogs congregate.
- Food/water bowls should be made of stainless steel instead of plastic because scratched plastic is hard to fully disinfect.
- Use a bleach and water mixture diluted to 1-part bleach x 30 parts water to disinfect common areas including show floors, grooming tables, ring gates, in-ring examination tables and ramps, and x-pens. Allow solution to completely dry (at least ten minutes in order to assure virus has been killed). Bleach breaks down quickly so solution should be made daily. Keep in mind that bleach becomes inactive in UV light. If mopping use two buckets so as not to cross contaminate areas.
- When wiping down hard surfaces paper towels are preferred over cloth.
- Consider having two exam tables at every ring so that they can be cleaned and allowed to air dry frequently in between classes.
- Provide hand sanitizer in each ring and in grooming areas.
- Exhibitors should consider grooming dogs at their cars instead of using grooming areas where dogs are in very close proximity.

Treatment

- Treatment of Canine Influenza Virus requires veterinary assistance. If you believe your dog may have Canine Influenza Virus, please contact your veterinarian immediately. Untreated, the illness may progress to pneumonia or other, more serious problems. H3N2 can lead to severe secondary pneumonia which can cause extremely sick dogs with potential fatalities.
- Most dogs take 2-3 weeks to recover from the illness.
- Any dog suspected of having Canine Influenza Virus should be immediately isolated from other dogs and should not attend dog shows, day care, grooming facilities, dog parks, or other places dogs gather. Dogs are contagious for up to 30 days once they have started showing symptoms.
- Contact your veterinarian to let them know that your dog may be showing symptoms of Canine Influenza Virus. If your dog is going to a veterinary hospital or clinic, call ahead to let them know you have a suspected case of Canine Influenza Virus. They may ask you to follow a specific protocol before entering the clinic to minimize the spread of the disease, including waiting in your car until they are ready to examine your dog.
- Keep sick dogs at home and isolated from other dogs and cats until you are certain the illness has run its course (typically 3-4 weeks).

Containment

- Any dog suspected of having Canine Influenza Virus should be immediately isolated from other dogs and should not attend dog shows, day care, grooming facilities, dog parks, or other places dogs gather. Dogs are contagious for up to 30 days once they have started showing symptoms.
- Contact your veterinarian to let them know that your dog may be showing symptoms of Canine Influenza Virus. If your dog is going to a veterinary hospital or clinic, call ahead to let them know you have a suspected case of Canine Influenza Virus. They may ask you to follow a specific protocol before entering the clinic to minimize the spread of the disease, including waiting in your car until they are ready to examine your dog.
- Keep sick dogs at home and isolated from other dogs and cats until you are certain the illness has run its course (typically 3-4 weeks).



Consideration for Event Venues

- Use a bleach and water mixture diluted to 1-part bleach x 30 parts water to disinfect common areas including show floors, grooming tables, ring gates, in-ring examination tables and ramps, and x-pens. Allow solution to completely dry (at least ten minutes in order to assure virus has been killed). Bleach breaks down quickly so solution should be made daily. Keep in mind that bleach becomes inactive in UV light. If mopping use two buckets so as not to cross contaminate areas.
- When wiping down hard surfaces paper towels are preferred over cloth.
- Consider having two exam tables at every ring so that they can be cleaned and allowed to air dry frequently in between classes.
- Provide hand sanitizer in each ring and in grooming areas.
- Exhibitors should consider grooming dogs at their cars instead of using grooming areas where dogs are in very close proximity.

Dr. Jerry Klein is a veterinarian in the emergency room at Chicago's largest veterinary emergency and specialty center. He was personally involved in treating hundreds of dogs sickened by the H3N2 virus during its initial outbreak in Chicago in spring of 2015.