

Canine Influenza

Canine influenza is a relatively new virus infecting dogs. The virus originated in horses, but it “mutated”, or changed to allow infection of dogs. The first documented cases were in Greyhounds in Florida, but the virus is now known to occur in many states in the USA.

Transmission of the virus from dog to dog is by spread of respiratory secretions – coughing, dog-to-dog contact, or indirect contact, such as animal caretakers or contaminated objects like bowls may transmit the virus. Canine influenza is usually a mild disease, resembling “kennel cough”. Signs include fever, nasal discharge, and moist cough. The course of infection is about 2-3 weeks. A more severe form with pneumonia may occur, but is uncommon. Death may occur, but it too is rare - the mortality rate is low (approximately 5%). All dogs are susceptible to this virus, but puppies, elderly dogs, and dogs with other diseases are more susceptible to disease.

If you suspect your dog has a respiratory infection, you should see your veterinarian. Diagnostic tests are available to determine if influenza virus is involved. Treatment is largely supportive, and may include antibiotics if secondary bacterial infection is suspected.

There is no evidence this virus can infect humans or other animals. Protection of dogs can be accomplished by routine infection control practices, such as isolating any dog with respiratory disease, cleaning and disinfection (the virus is easily killed with most disinfectants), and routine hygiene. This is especially important for kennels and animal care facilities. There is no vaccine available yet, but one may become available in the near future.

For more information, control guidelines are available by clicking [here](#). Additional information is available at the following websites:

- **American Veterinary Medical Association -** www.avma.org/public_health/influenza/default.asp
- **University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine -** www.vetmed.ufl.edu/pr
- **Cornell University Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory -** www.diaglab.vet.cornell.edu
- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention –** www.cdc.gov/healthypets
- **Association of Shelter Veterinarians –** www.sheltervet.org
- **Information for Veterinarians –** www.vet.ksu.edu/features/health/Canine_Influenza_DVM_handout_BW.pdf#search=%22canine%20influenza%22