



# Canine Influenza: The Dog Flu



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Canine influenza—also known as the “dog flu”—is highly-contagious virus that can make dogs miserable. Learn about how you can protect your pet.

## Facts on canine influenza

There are two strains of Influenza Type A known to affect dogs internationally:

- **H3N8**, which broke out around 2004 in Florida and continues to cause sporadic disease
- **H3N2**, a milder strain first seen in Chicago in 2015

In May of 2017, the H3N2 strain was diagnosed in dogs in Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, Kentucky, Tennessee, Missouri, Louisiana, and Illinois. In 2018, California veterinarians received word of cases diagnosed in the Bay Area and the Central Valley.

## How & where it can be caught

Transmission of canine influenza requires direct contact with an infected and contagious dog's fresh saliva or oro-nasal secretions.

Lifestyle plays an important factor in your dog's risk of catching the

dog flu, as it is usually caught in environments where other dogs are present, such as shelters, dog parks, boarding kennels, and doggie day cares. Even places like performance competitions, dog shows and training classes put dogs at higher risk of infection.

If your dog is regularly around other dogs in these kinds of places, don't let him or her socialize with coughing dogs, and limit or prevent exposure if you suspect that another dog might be sick.

By contrast, dogs that spend most of their time at home or rarely come in contact with other dogs have a lower risk.

## Dog flu vaccinations

As with human strains of the flu, canine influenza vaccinations are available for your dog. Here are some facts on vaccinations:

- Vaccination for one strain does **not** help prevent another strain
- If vaccinating, be sure the vaccine contains both strains, or that you are getting two shots, one with each strain
  - Full vaccination requires an initial shot, then a booster 3 weeks later
  - A regular kennel cough vaccination will **not** prevent influenza



## See a veterinarian if...

If you live in California, you should take your dog to a veterinarian if he or she:

- has any of the lifestyle risk factors mentioned above
- has recently traveled to the Bay Area or the Central Valley
- is feeling sick or has a cough

If you do bring in a dog that is suspected to be sick, you may be asked to wait in the parking lot or to come into the clinic through a separate entrance.

## Symptoms of canine influenza

Dogs suffering with the **mild form of influenza** may develop the following symptoms:

- a soft, moist cough that persists anywhere from 10 to 30 days (though some can develop a dry cough similar to the traditional kennel cough caused by Bordetella)
- lethargy, reduced appetite
- low fever (under 103 degrees Fahrenheit)

Dogs with the **severe form of influenza** may develop the following symptoms:

- high fevers (104-106 degrees Fahrenheit)
- clinical signs of pneumonia, such as increased respiratory rates and effort (fatal cases of pneumonia resulting from infection with influenza have been reported in dogs, but the fatality rate is less than 10%)

## What to do if your dog gets sick

The dog flu is typically not dangerous; most dogs recover from in two to three weeks. Treatment of sick dogs depends on their symptoms and how long they have been sick, but typically involves supportive care, fluids, cough suppressants, or even anti-viral medication.

Severely affected pets usually get antibiotics to prevent or treat pneumonia, and pneumonia cases often require hospitalization.

If you're unsure about whether or not your dog is sick or if your dog's lifestyle puts them at risk for exposure, call the Santa Maria Valley Humane Society today at (805) 349-3435. 🐾