

# **Halo House Animal Resort– Kennel Cough Information**

We don't see cases often, but kennel cough, is just like with your workplace and kids at school, colds tend to spread in higher density populations.

Kennel cough, (aka Bordetella or Canine Infectious Tracheobronchitis) is an airborne respiratory syndrome that is highly contagious among dogs.

It is spread anywhere that dogs are or have been, and is highly contagious before, during, and up to two weeks after any symptoms appear. The Etiologic agent (cause) of kennel cough is multiple and sometimes complex viruses, often with secondary bacterial involvement. Infectious agents include viruses (ex. Canine adenovirus-2, canine parainfluenza) and bacteria (ex. Bordetella, Mycoplasma). Other bacteria that might be considered secondary invaders include Pseudomonas, E. Coli, Klebsiella, Pasteurella, and Streptococcus. The vaccination only covers a couple of the more than 40 agents that can cause kennel cough – therefore, it is not 100% effective.

## **What Does Arbor Lane Do to Limit Exposure to Kennel Cough?**

Halo House Animal Resort takes many precautions to limit the chances of your dog catching kennel cough or other communicable diseases. Our facility is built using sealed flooring that is sanitized with the highest quality solution daily. All of our water and food dishes, bedding, and other equipment is also disinfected constantly. We have an Ozonizer Air purification system that bring in fresh air much faster than an ordinary building (such as used in hospitals). Once oxidizers are released, they immediately begin to eradicate dozens of indoor air irritants such as mold, bacteria, and viruses. The oxidizers also help to sanitize indoor surfaces.

## **Does my Dog Have Kennel Cough?**

Symptoms of kennel cough usually start 5-10 days after exposure to the infecting agent(s). A persistent dry cough with a “honking” sound is the main clue your dog has caught kennel cough. In most cases, s/he will appear healthy except for the cough. Your dog's appetite and activity level usually won't change, but don't be alarmed if s/he gags or coughs up a white, foamy phlegm. Other symptoms may include sneezing, lethargy, loss of appetite and a fever. Symptoms are often worse after exercise, or if your dog gets excited or pulls against the collar.

## **What Should I Do?**

Mild or uncomplicated cases are often self-limiting, meaning that they will run their course over about 2 weeks and then clear without medical intervention. During this time, it is important that you maintain hydration, limit exercise, and manage the symptoms in order to keep your pooch as comfortable as possible. You can take your dog in the shower with you, the steam will help clear the congestion. You can also put a vitamin C tablet in their water dish to help support their immune system, and use a children's cough suppressant (1 tsp of Children's Robitussin) every 12 hours to relieve symptoms. Alternatively, a mixture of 2/3 honey, 1/3 lemon in hot water is also soothing to the throat.

## **Do I Need to Take My Dog to the Vet?**

Mild kennel cough is self-limiting and symptoms should clear within about 2 weeks with conservative management of the symptoms. You should see some improvement in your dog's condition within one week of treatment, but be alert to how long the symptoms last. If your dog has nasal discharge, is breathing rapidly, refuses to eat or seems lethargic, take her/him to the veterinarian right away. Serious cases of kennel cough can lead to tracheal infections or pneumonia if left untreated. In most cases, your vet will do a general exam and prescribe a general antibiotic and cough suppressant.

## **How Can I Prevent my Dog from Catching Kennel Cough?**

The only guaranteed way to prevent kennel cough is to keep your dog away from all other dogs, and any place where other dogs have been. It is airborne, and highly contagious long before symptoms show, so it is impossible to identify which dogs may or may not be harboring the virus. There is a vaccine available at your vet which may prevent infection, or reduce the duration and severity of symptoms. However, like the human cold or flu, there are MANY strains of kennel cough, and the vaccine is NOT 100% effective in prevention. It is best to discuss this with your vet and make the decision that you deem is best for you and your dog.

## **When Can I Bring My Dog Back to Groomer/Kennel/Dog Park?**

Kennel cough can be contagious for up to 2 weeks after the cough is resolved. Most dogs are contagious up to 10 days they start to cough, making limiting the disease next to impossible. Some studies show persistence for several months after all signs have cleared, depending on the viruses and bacterium involved. A good rule of thumb is to wait 10-14 days after symptoms have resolved to re-introduce your dog back into a group environment.

## **I Think My Dog Caught Kennel Cough at Halo House Animal Resort. What Should I Do?**

Call us immediately! We need to know that there is kennel cough going around so that we can be on high alert for other at-risk dogs in our care. Please monitor your dog carefully, and seek veterinary care if your dog shows any symptoms that may indicate that the kennel cough is severe or complicated. Please understand that kennel cough is a risk that you assume in bringing your dog to our facility, and that we will not cover vet bills resulting from your dog catching kennel cough. However, just like the risk of sending your child to school and coming home with a cold or flu, the risk of kennel cough is inherent in a mixed dog environment, and by choosing to bring your dog here, you are assuming that risk. While we do everything possible to mitigate the risks of your dog becoming ill, we simply cannot guarantee or take responsibility for the spread of kennel cough through our facility.