



# Kennel Cough

Kennel cough is a viral infection that is very similar to a chest cold in people. Though it usually clears up on its own, kennel cough is highly contagious to other dogs. Symptoms of kennel cough include: coughing, sneezing, runny nose, red or runny eyes, fever, lack of appetite and decreased activity.

Dogs can catch kennel cough in several ways. It can spread through aerosols in the air, from direct dog to dog contact, or through germs on contaminated objects. Kennel cough is often spread when dogs are housed in close quarters, like a shelter or boarding facility, through direct contact at clinics, or even from greeting another dog or sharing a water dish at the dog park. Most kennels will not board your pet without proof of a recent vaccination against parainfluenza and bordetella, two of the main causes of kennel cough.

Dogs who have frequent contact with other dogs, dogs that have compromised immune systems, dogs who are stressed, and young and unvaccinated dogs are at higher risk for kennel cough. The best way to prevent kennel cough is to prevent exposure, and make sure your dog is vaccinated. Keep in mind that vaccinations aren't useful if a dog has already caught the virus.

Kennel cough is typically treated with supportive care. You should see improvement within 7-10 days, and in most cases the signs of kennel cough decrease and disappear after three weeks. Young puppies, elderly dogs and other immunocompromised animals may take longer to recover. Relief from stress may help speed recovery and antibiotics may be used to prevent or treat a secondary bacterial infection.

If you suspect your dog has kennel cough, isolate your dog from all other dogs. Seek treatment from your veterinarian if your dog has nasal discharge, is breathing rapidly, refuses to eat or seems lethargic. Serious cases of kennel cough can lead to pneumonia if left untreated.

*Information provided in part by the ASPCA.  
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