



Canine Influenza- H3N8

Canine Influenza is a virus that most commonly infects dogs that have been housed closely or have been in close contact with other dogs. This virus was first noted when equine influenza virus was transferred to canines on the same race track. Because of this, dogs infected have no immunity to the virus due to lack of exposure and, thus, lack of immune response.

Canine Influenza is transmitted via aerosolized respiratory secretions, contaminated objects and/or people moving between the infected and uninfected. ALL dogs are susceptible to contracting this virus because it is newly emerging. Canine Influenza does not discriminate between breed, sex or age.

Once exposed to Canine Influenza ALL dogs are infected. However, 20% of dogs do not show symptoms of the virus but remain a source of infection to others. The remaining 80% of dogs may show signs such as cough, yellow-green nasal discharge and/or a high fever. There is no evidence that Canine Influenza can be transmitted from dogs to humans.

Diagnosis of Canine Influenza involves collection of a blood sample. Once diagnosed or suspected in your dog, treatment is supportive. Because this is a virus, there is no "magic drug" to make it go away. Largely, helping to decrease the spread is attributed to hand washing, sanitizing, isolation and awareness.

At this time, there is a Canine Influenza vaccine available. Like most vaccines, it is administered under the skin initially and again in three weeks and is then given once yearly. This vaccine does not prevent infection, but decreases the severity and duration of clinical illness. In addition, the vaccine reduces the amount of the virus that a dog sheds to others.

At Eastside Animal Hospital, we strive to provide the best standard of care possible. Because of this, beginning November first, we will require the Influenza vaccine for all dogs that will be boarding and/or grooming with us. If your dog is around other dogs and/or is receiving the Bordetella bronchiseptica vaccine, they are a candidate for the Canine Influenza vaccine. Please ask your veterinarian if this vaccine is right for your companion.