



Canine Cough

Contagious Canine Cough Complex, more simply known as canine or kennel cough is a highly contagious respiratory disease of dogs that causes episodes of a loud hacking cough. Many people describe it as sounding like "something is stuck in my dog's throat". The symptoms may last from several days to several weeks.

Contagious Canine Cough Complex (CCCC) is caused by multiple viruses and bacteria. Transmission of the disease is through the respiratory tract. Dogs that board, go to dog parks, training classes, shows, grooming shops or simply visit with other dogs in their neighborhood can be exposed to the disease. Things that increase a dog's risk for CCCC include travel, crowding, heavy dust exposure, cigarette smoke, cold temperatures, and poor ventilation. Sometimes we never determine where the exposure occurred. Symptoms usually develop 2-14 days after exposure.

For many dogs, contagious canine cough complex is a mild problem that resolves spontaneously. The dogs should remain bright and happy, eat well and rarely run a fever. Some dogs may have a discharge from the nose. In other cases, recovery can be helped by antibiotics and cough suppressants. It is very important that they drink plenty of water, get plenty of rest and not go out among other dogs where they will transmit the disease.

Canine cough can become a serious problem under special circumstances. This includes very young puppies, especially those with a recent shipping history (pet store puppies), any age dog that has spent time in a shelter environment or a dog that has pre-existing heart/respiratory disease or other chronic illnesses. In these cases, canine cough may develop into a very serious pneumonia.

While immunization is not 100% protective, the incidence and severity of canine cough can be **reduced** by vaccination. Remember, there are often multiple things contributing to the disease and we cannot vaccinate against everything. Vaccination is not useful in a dog already infected with canine cough or a dog that is going to be exposed the day after getting vaccinated. It is therefore important to plan ahead and get your dog vaccinated at least 2 weeks before potential exposure and then every 6 months thereafter.