

# Canine Flu – What You Need To Know

## *Get Your Dog Vaccinated at McKillip Animal Hospital*

### **The Recent Outbreak of H3N2 Canine Influenza**

H3N2 canine influenza is a newly emerging, highly contagious respiratory infection, first recognized within the Midwestern United States in 2015. As a result, almost all dogs lack immunity and are susceptible to infection regardless of their age or breed. Virtually all dogs exposed to the virus become infected and nearly 80% show clinical signs of disease.

The widespread susceptibility of dogs to this form of canine influenza means **it is absolutely imperative to have your pet vaccinated**. At McKillip Animal Hospital, our veterinary team can administer the new H3N2 canine influenza vaccine for you.

### **Risk Factors**

The 40 states thus far affected by canine influenza have occurred in animal shelters, humane societies, rescue groups, pet stores, boarding kennels, and veterinary clinics. Any dog in any contact with other dogs is at risk. Canine influenza virus can be spread via direct contact with respiratory secretions from infected dogs (coughing, sneezing, barking), and by contact with contaminated inanimate objects.

Dogs who cough or exhibit other signs of respiratory disease should not be taken to facilities where other dogs can be exposed to them. Clothing, equipment, surfaces, and hands should be cleaned and disinfected after exposure to dogs showing signs of respiratory disease to prevent transmission of infection to susceptible dogs. Clothing can be adequately cleaned by using a detergent at normal laundry temperatures.

### **How Is Canine Influenza Treated?**

We advise the following to soothe your dog while the condition runs its course:

- Good nutrition and supplements to raise immunity
- A warm, quiet and comfortable spot to rest
- Medications to treat secondary bacterial infections
- Intravenous fluids to maintain hydration may be needed
- Workup and treatment for pneumonia if no improvement on oral antibiotics

Be advised, while most dogs will fight the infection within 10 to 30 days, secondary infections require antibiotics and, in the case of pneumonia, hospitalization.

If canine influenza is suspected, treatment will often focus on maximizing the ability of your dog's immune system to combat the virus. A typical approach might include prescribing an antimicrobial if a secondary bacterial infection is suspected and/or administration of fluids if your dog is dehydrated.

### **Can Dogs Die From Canine Influenza Virus (CIV)?**

Yes, but if CIV is quickly diagnosed and treated, the fatality rate is low. Deaths are usually caused by secondary complications, such as pneumonia. It is important that dogs with CIV receive proper veterinary care – starting with the new H3N2 vaccine available at McKillip Animal Hospital.