

What is Kennel Cough?

Kennel cough is a disease characterized as inflammation of the upper respiratory system, it can be caused by *viral infections*, such as canine distemper, canine adenovirus, canine parainfluenza virus, canine respiratory coronavirus or Orthomyxoviridae Influenza virus, or *bacterial infections*, such as Bordetella bronchiseptica. It is misleadingly labeled because the infection can spread quickly among dogs such as in a kennel. Other facilities or areas that your pet may come into contact with “Kennel Cough” are grooming salons, pet-friendly malls and stores, pet parks, your backyard or neighborhood or any where they may share toys or a water bowl with other dogs. Felines can also be carriers/transmitters of canine “Kennel Cough”, although they do not contract canine “Kennel Cough” themselves they can spread the virus. Washing your hands after handling any cats can prevent the passing of the virus and is strongly recommended.

Both virus and bacterial causes of kennel cough are spread in a variety of ways: through the air by infected dogs sneezing and coughing, through contact with contaminated surfaces (toys, water bowls, bones, etc.) and through direct contact (nose-to-nose). It is **highly** contagious, even days or weeks after their symptoms disappear. Symptoms begin usually two to three days after exposure, and can potentially progress to pneumonia.

What are the Symptoms of Kennel Cough?

Symptoms can include a harsh, dry, hacking cough, retching, sneezing, snorting, gagging, ocular discharge or vomiting in response to light pressing of the trachea or after excitement/exercise. The presence of a fever varies from case to case. The disease can last initially from 10–20 days and can re-break when the dog is put into a stressful situation which puts stress on the dog’s immune system. Diagnosis is made by seeing these symptoms; having a history of exposure is also helpful, but not always found, as kennel cough is easily spread through contact with contaminated surfaces, such as the ground, toys and water bowls.

How can I prevent my dog from getting Kennel Cough?

Prevention is by vaccinating for canine adenovirus, distemper, parainfluenza, and Bordetella. In kennels, the best prevention is to keep all the cages disinfected, exposed pets away from healthy pets and sick pets sequestered immediately. In some cases, such as Doggie Daycares or Non-Traditional Playcare type boarding environments, it is usually not a cleaning or disinfecting issue, but rather an airborne issue, as the dogs are in contact with each other’s saliva, breath, toys and water bowls.

How do I treat/medicate my pet if they are exposed to or come down with Kennel Cough?

Antibiotics are given to treat any bacterial infection present. Cough suppressants can be prescribed if the cough is not productive.

What is West Chester Pet Resort’s policy on Kennel Cough?

The Resort is a facility for well pets ONLY. If your pet is hacking, coughing, sneezing, has discharge from their eyes and/or nose, lethargic, experiencing diarrhea and/or vomiting please keep them at home. If they have a (pet) roommate that is showing any of the above symptoms your pet has been exposed and could be shedding the virus to others. Although we do not check-in pets that are exhibiting signs of illness there may be times a pet can be contagious and shedding a virus without showing any visible, clinical signs so our facility cannot guarantee that a pet will not be exposed/contract “Kennel Cough”. As a courtesy to our guests, Chester Animal Clinic will do a complimentary physical exam should your pet should begin hacking, coughing, and/or gagging within 7 – 10 days of daycare, boarding, or grooming services. The pets must be cleared by one of Chester Animal Clinic’s veterinarians to be allowed to return for boarding, daycare and/or training services. **Owners will be financially responsible for any medication needed for their pet, should any be necessary.**