



Kennel Cough (“*Bordetella Bronchiseptica*”)

“Over the years, I have witnessed many people having a very unreasonable fear of Kennel Cough mainly due to fear based advertising that kennel cough is some sort of horrible disease while even the Merck Veterinary Manual says that: Kennel cough is a mild self-limiting infection that results in the inflammation of the upper airways transmitted by air... This condition would rarely lead to complications or death....

*“Infectious tracheobronchitis is a mild, self-limiting disease that results in inflammation of the upper airways transmitted by air and caused possibly but not surely by several different viruses, mainly Parainfluenza virus and also by a bacteria - *Bordetella Bronchiseptica*, however, the exact cause may vary.”*

The Merck Veterinary Manual also states that:

“This condition would rarely lead to complications or death only in animals with a weakened immune system. in summary, Kennel Cough is not much different then a cold that most of us catch from time to time and cure by rest and tea.””

- excerpt taken from Dr. Peter Dobias, DVM
<http://peterdobias.com/blogs/blog/11015065-kennel-cough-vaccine-exposed>

WHAT IS KENNEL COUGH?

Kennel Cough is a highly contagious canine 'flu', and like our flu shot, the Kennel Cough vaccines are not comprehensive against every potential strain your pup may come across. As with our human flu, the canine version has also created mutated strains which may not be covered by the current vaccine, (which guards against the more common strains). We do ask that all pups still be vaccinated against Kennel Cough, just to reduce the possibility of contraction and future exposures. The vaccine is NOT a guarantee, and your pup may still end up with Kennel Cough, but we do believe in being proactive and accountable, especially for those pups able to. (If we all do everything we can, then that's all any of us can ask of one another).

We do not require your dog to be vaccinated for Bordatella, Influenza or Lepto (non-core) if an animal is in or has a physical condition or health condition that precludes the safe immunization, or re-immunization of the above, non-core vaccines. In which case, they may be exempt from this requirement. However, if you choose to or have been instructed by your veterinarian to use these vaccines, we ask that they be administered a MINIMUM of two weeks prior to your dog's first visit to us.

It is important to remember that Kennel Cough has an incubation period of 2 to 14 days, with acute/active symptoms lasting from 1-2 weeks (sometimes even longer). Infected dogs can continue to shed the Bordetella organism for up to 2-3 months following an infection.

That said, same as your children attending daycare and school everyday, it's practically inevitable for a social canine in Toronto, to come across it at some point. With a healthy immune system, symptoms will eventually lessen as it runs its course, and for those who've had it, often won't show any symptoms at all. Symptoms are characterized by a nagging, dry, harsh, unproductive, honking cough that seems to persist. A dog with a mild case may remain active, maintain their appetite and recoup within 3 - 10 days. After the symptoms are gone a dog is still contagious and can continue to shed the virus for up to 14 weeks. This is very hard to completely prevent in any daycare or canine dense environment.

Just as you may try to get over a cold without antibiotics your dog can too. Although a dog with a severe case or weak immune system could be lethargic, present with fever, loss of appetite and may even develop into pneumonia. Speak with your veterinarian and watch for these signs.

PREVENTATIVE MEASURES HERE AT BALANCED PAWS:

As with every 'flu season', we ramp up our (already rigorous daily and weekly) cleaning and disinfection protocols here. We continue using premium hospital grade disinfectants to spray down surfaces, bedding and toys every morning and night; all bedding is stripped down regularly and washed on our hottest, "Santiary" setting in our on site laundry machines;

Our walks are kept to a minimum to reduce exposure while in our care, especially during the height of of the season. (There's still lots of ball playing, antler chewing, and usual puppy rambunctiousness, so pups don't even notice anything's changed. =P);

We do not allow dogs to come in right after they've had a vaccine. Like us, they can experience flu like symptoms; and this can be confusing and misleading for us;

We do not allow dogs presenting with the above described symptoms, and will quarantine and call owners to come pick up their dogs if they do;

Kennel Cough is an airborne virus. We keep windows and the door to the outdoor area open during a nice day, so there is a cross breeze. We also have a ventilation fans to keep air circulating/moving.

WHAT IF I THINK MY PUP HAS KENNEL COUGH?

If your pup does indeed start showing symptoms, please do your best to keep your pup away from other dogs and contact your vet for advisement on how to proceed. Often times, with a strong immune system, like our common cold, it will pass, (we definitely aren't veterinarians, but we personally believe, a pups' immune system will only be stronger after having battled it. Much like kids at their respective daycare and school programs). But in some cases with more severe strains that we've seen left unchecked, they can, and have, manifested into fairly serious cases of pneumonia.

That's why, we feel it's always better to be err on the side of caution, especially for those who've never experienced Kennel Cough with a pup, and contact your trusted veterinarian, so they can help monitor any progressions before it gets too out of control.

SUGGESTED PREVENTION PROTOCOL:

- Contact your vet and make sure you're pup is covered for Kennel Cough and whether they need reboosting, if not, find out your options;
- Refrain from using communal water bowls, esp. from sources that aren't being monitored, i.e. left outdoors;
- Try to reduce visits to dog parks for the next couple weeks, and check in with your vet to see if they're still getting pups in with kennel cough;
- Be Proactive: keep your eyes and ears open; if you see a neighbourhood pup out for a romp or stroll that doesn't look quite right (gummy or runny eyes, nasal discharge); if you hear a pup hack like they've got a furball; that pup could very well have kennel cough, and it's smart to keep your pup away;

Many clients aren't sure the most 'polite' means of doing the above, be it if they're the one with the sick pup, or avoiding one. My suggestion is just smile and hold your pup close on the leash; if the owner still doesn't look like they're going to keep their pup away, just a smile and 'oh, i'm sorry, my pup is feeling a bit under the weather, would you mind keeping your pup away?' or 'oh, i'm sorry, my pup isn't feeling his/her best, would you mind getting your pup?'. Most pup owners are pretty great and should get the message.

Please keep a close eye on your pup, if he/she seems unusually tired, or starts showing possible symptoms, we do ask that you please contact myself as soon as possible (via email or a call) and keep your pup at home, (if you require dog walking to supplement during their quarantine, we highly recommend that you communicate the importance of on-leash and private walks to your dog walker. Please remember to let any dog walker if know your pup has kennel cough so they can take the necessary precautions too).