

WARNING: DOG FLU OUTBREAK!

Is there any truth to the reports about a “Dog Flu” outbreak?

Yes. A recent outbreak of canine influenza (dog flu) seems to have started in the San Antonio area, and has now spread across Texas. All dog owners need to be aware of the disease and on alert to protect their pets.

What is dog flu?

Dog flu is a contagious respiratory disease in dogs caused by a specific Type A influenza virus referred to as “canine influenza virus.” This is a disease of dogs, not of humans. This means it can spread between dogs, but not from dogs to humans.

What are the symptoms of dog flu?

The symptoms of this illness are cough, runny nose, and fever. A small proportion of dogs that contract the disease, however, develop a severe respiratory infection.

How serious is this disease?

The number of dogs that die from canine influenza is very small. Some dogs that contract the disease have no symptoms at all, while others develop severe infections. Severe illness is characterized by the onset of pneumonia. But about 80 percent of dogs that come down with canine flu will have only a mild form of the disease.

How does dog flu spread?

The canine flu virus can be spread by direct contact with respiratory secretions from infected dogs, by contact with contaminated objects, and by people moving between infected and uninfected dogs. Therefore, dog owners whose dog coughs or shows other signs of respiratory disease should not participate in activities with their dog or bring their dog to facilities where other dogs can be exposed to the virus. Clothing, equipment, surfaces, and hands should be cleaned and disinfected after exposure to dogs showing signs of respiratory disease.

Is there a test for canine flu?

Testing to confirm the presence of canine flu virus infection is available at Old Town Animal Hospital. If your pet displays any of the symptoms listed above, make an appointment to bring your pet to see one of our veterinarians right away.

How is canine influenza treated?

Treatment largely consists of supportive care. This helps the pet mount an immune response. In the milder form of the disease, care may include medication to make your dog more comfortable and fluids to ensure that your dog remains well hydrated. Your veterinarian may prescribe broad-spectrum antibiotics if a secondary bacterial infection is suspected.

Is there a vaccine for canine influenza?

Yes, an approved vaccine is available. Old Town Animal Hospital veterinarians recommend that all dogs get immunized as soon as possible. Call for an appointment to get your pet immunized.

What is the risk to humans from this virus?

To date, there is no evidence of transmission of canine influenza virus from dogs to people.

My dog has a cough what should I do?

Schedule an appointment at Old Town Animal Hospital so your veterinarian can evaluate your dog and recommend an appropriate course of treatment.