



CANINE KENNEL COUGH FACT SHEET

Sioux Falls Area Humane Society
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WHAT IS KENNEL COUGH?	Kennel cough, also known as infectious tracheobronchitis, is a general term for a group of viruses and bacteria that cause upper respiratory infections in dogs. These diseases are highly contagious between dogs, but generally cannot be spread to other species, like humans or cats.
HOW IS KENNEL COUGH SPREAD?	Kennel cough is spread through secretions from the nose and mouth of an infected dog. These secretions can be transferred by direct contact from dog to dog, by coughing and sneezing, or via objects like toys, bowls, human hands and clothing.
WHAT ARE THE SIGNS?	Most frequently, we see dogs with a dry, hacking cough and/or a runny nose. The cough may be severe enough to cause retching or vomiting in some dogs. In severe cases, kennel cough may progress to pneumonia. If this occurs, dogs may run a fever, lose their appetite, and become depressed.
WHY IS KENNEL COUGH SO COMMON IN SHELTER DOGS?	Stressed, unvaccinated animals living in close quarters are most susceptible to infections. Many of our dogs were once strays or did not receive routine veterinary care. With so many vulnerable animals in one area, illness is very difficult to prevent, despite our strict cleaning protocols.
HOW IS KENNEL COUGH TREATED?	If the illness is mild, a dog may not require medications, and may simply need time for the infection to run its course. As our animals are under a great deal of stress, we routinely prescribe antibiotics to treat the bacterial component of kennel cough infections. Remember, antibiotics are not effective against viruses, so it may take two to three weeks for the infection to run its course.
WHEN SHOULD I BE CONCERNED?	Once a dog is adopted, we <i>always</i> recommend that new owners follow up with their veterinarian. Being on antibiotics is not a guarantee that a dog will recover uneventfully. Signs of a severe infection include lethargy, unwillingness to eat, and fever. Please contact us or your veterinarian if you have any concerns.
CAN MY DOG AT HOME CATCH KENNEL COUGH?	Yes! Even dogs that have received the kennel cough (Bordetella) vaccine may contract the disease. Not all causes of kennel cough can be prevented with vaccines. Any dog exposed to kennel cough should be kept apart from healthy animals until your veterinarian tells you that your dog is no longer contagious.