

FAQs for Pet Parents: Canine Influenza

What is Canine Influenza?

Canine Influenza, also known as “dog flu” or CIV, is a viral disease caused by two major strains within the United States. The original H3N8 strain was first reported in 2004 in racing greyhounds, but the more recent H3N2 strain was responsible for the 2015 epidemic that spread rapidly to over half the country and is now found in 46 states.

How is it spread?

Similar to the human flu, canine influenza can be spread through four different routes. These include direct contact (licking), indirect contact (coughing and sneezing), human-to-dog contact (healthy dogs can be touched by humans who previously touched an infected dog), and through contaminated surfaces like food and water bowls, cages, and toys.

10–20%

of dogs infected with CIV will not show any signs of disease but can still shed and spread the virus to other dogs in the community.

80–90%

of dogs exposed to canine influenza will become infected.

What are possible signs to watch for in my dog?

One of the challenges of diagnosing canine influenza is that the signs in dogs look very similar to other diseases in the canine infectious respiratory disease complex (CIRDC) like kennel cough.



Patients may demonstrate:

- Sneezing
- Coughing (dry or moist)
- Low appetite
- Low energy
- Nasal discharge
- Low-grade fever

What should I do if I think my dog has canine influenza?

If you notice these possible signs of canine influenza in your dog, it's important to call your veterinarian for next steps which could include a physical exam and possibly diagnostic testing and supportive treatment options.

Your vet may recommend to isolate away from other dogs in the community for up to four weeks, including but not limited to dog parks, grooming salons, and boarding and daycare facilities. Any travel plans should be postponed.

Three effective strategies for canine influenza:

There are three effective strategies for prevention of canine influenza:

1. Ask your veterinarian about the personalized vaccination recommendations for your pet.
2. Stay informed of outbreaks with the Dog Flu Outbreak map to avoid exposure.
3. Disinfect your home appropriately and ask questions of your boarding and grooming facility to ensure they are using similar strategies.
 - Wash hands frequently – dog flu can remain on the skin for up to 12 hours
 - Clean toys, food and water bowls, and other areas clean with soap and water frequently
 - Wash clothes after contact with an infected dog – dog flu can remain on clothes for 24 hours

