

What You Need to Know About Canine Influenza

Help Us Keep Our Shelters and Communities Safe

Several dogs across the District have tested positive for canine influenza. While canine influenza is a treatable illness with a good prognosis for recovery, we need your help to stop the spread by ensuring you have all the information you need to keep your pets and our community safe. The best way to minimize the spread of canine influenza is to quarantine infected dogs for four weeks.



What is canine influenza?

- ▶ Canine influenza is a very contagious respiratory disease.
- ▶ Canine influenza is a treatable disease with a good prognosis for recovery.
- ▶ Many dogs do not have immunity to canine influenza and are vulnerable to infection.
- ▶ Symptoms include the following:
 - Coughing
 - Nasal discharge
 - Fever
 - Sneezing
 - Lethargy
 - Reduced appetite
 - Eye discharge
- ▶ Symptoms are typically mild to moderate and last two to three weeks. Some dogs may develop secondary infections leading to more severe illness or pneumonia, but it is not common.

How is canine influenza spread?

It is passed through respiratory droplets (coughing or sneezing) and through contact with contaminated surfaces. Canine Influenza may live on surfaces for 24 to 48 hours.

How do you prevent it?

There are vaccines available for both known strains of canine influenza: H3N8 and H3N2. Ask your veterinarian for more information about the availability of vaccines and if they are right for your dog.

Isolation is also a key factor in preventing the spread of the virus. Since dogs may still be contagious for 4 weeks, even without symptoms, we recommend a 28-day isolation period.

Canine Influenza



How do you treat it?

There is no treatment for a virus (think the common cold). All we can do is provide supportive care until the animal beats the virus on their own. If they develop a bacterial infection on top of the viral one, we can use antibiotics to help.

How can I safely adopt or foster a dog who may have been exposed to canine influenza?

If you've adopted or fostered a dog and believe they may have been exposed to the virus, it's usually still safe to welcome them into your home if you do not have other resident dogs. While very rare, canine influenza can also be spread to cats, ferrets or guinea pigs. If you adopt or foster a dog you suspect of being exposed to canine influenza, we also recommend you avoid dog parks, boarding facilities, doggy daycare or any places with other dogs for 28 days.

What should I do if I adopted a dog I think may have been exposed to canine influenza?

- ▶ If your dog is displaying any of the symptoms above, keep your dog separate from any resident or community dogs for 28 days. In very rare cases, transmission can also occur between cats, ferrets or guinea pigs.
- ▶ Discuss with your veterinarian appropriate medical care to reduce symptoms and prevent serious illness.
- ▶ Avoid dog parks, boarding facilities, doggy daycare, or any places with other dogs for 28 days.
- ▶ Be mindful to wash your hands and change clothing before handling other dogs. The virus can remain on surfaces for 24 to 48 hours.
- ▶ Household disinfectants labeled to kill Influenza A are highly effective at eliminating the virus (Clorox, Lysol, bleach, etc.).

Owner in need of assistance?

Contact the Humane Rescue Alliance's pet support team at petsupport@humanerescuealliance.org or (202) 723-5730, option #4.



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