

What is Canine Influenza?

Just like people, dogs can be affected by different strains of influenza, a highly contagious respiratory infection. There are two strains of canine influenza known to affect dogs internationally. H3N8 broke out around 2004 in Florida, originated when the virus jumped from horses to dogs, and continues to cause sporadic disease; H3N2, a milder strain, originated in South Korea, jumping from birds to dogs in 2006 and was first seen in Chicago in 2015.

After exposure, some dogs will produce enough antibodies that they don't have any signs of illness. The signs in both strains range from fevers, listlessness, coughing, sneezing, and a runny nose to life-threatening pneumonia, but typically it's much like having kennel cough.

Where have cases been reported?

In May 2017, canine H3N2 influenza was diagnosed in dogs in Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, Kentucky, Tennessee, Missouri, Louisiana, and Illinois. This was the same, newer strain of H3N2 involved in the 2015 outbreak in Chicago. More cases are possible as this outbreak may or may not spread.

For the newer H3N2 strain, geographic locations expanded in the months after the initial outbreak in March, 2015.

As of June 14, 2017, states with recently confirmed H3N2 are currently California, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Missouri, North Carolina, South Carolina, Louisiana, Tennessee, Illinois, and Texas.

Which dogs are at risk?

Dogs that are taken to venues where dogs interact/socialize

- Boarding facilities
- Doggie daycares
- Shelters/rescues
- Pet stores
- Adoption groups
- Breeding facilities
- Groomers
- Travel/shows/competition

- Walking in the neighborhood/pet store

Clinical Sign:

- Non-specific
- Coughing
Sneezing
Discharge from the nose and eyes
Fever
Lethargy
Loss of appetite
Pneumonia
Death
- Call your vet!!

Vaccination is not a treatment option, it is preventative

- Vaccination must be performed BEFORE you see disease, given in 2 doses, 2-4 weeks apart
- Immunity is achieved 2 weeks after the second dose
The only prevention is vaccination!

Information condensed with thanks to Mark Rishniw, DVM, ACVIM, Veterinary Information Network and Melissa Bourgeois, DVM, PhD, DACVM (virology, immunology) Senior Specialist, Drug Safety, Merck Animal Health