



# Kennel Cough (CIRDC)

**Congratulations on your new dog! The shelter staff has worked very hard to ensure the health of your dog, but kennel cough is a very common disease in dogs adopted from shelters. Here is some information about this condition that you should know.**

## **Terms: kennel cough and CIRDC**

It is common to use the term "kennel cough", however, this is an overly simplistic view of a complicated syndrome. The disease is not limited to the trachea (throat), nor does it always manifest as coughing. Clinical syndromes of Canine Infectious Respiratory Disease Complex (CIRDC) may include sneezing, nasal and ocular discharge, and sometimes lower respiratory and/or systemic disease. For simplicity, we will refer to it as "kennel cough" here, but you see the more technical term CIRDC in medical charts.

## **What is kennel cough?**

Kennel cough is common, contagious, and very rarely fatal. The disease is caused by bacteria and/or viruses that spread among dogs in shelters. Kennel cough is spread by air and hands; therefore it is as common in animal shelters as the common cold is in day care centers.

Kennel cough could spread to your other dogs. Vaccinated, healthy dogs in a home usually develop mild if any signs of kennel cough after exposure to a new dog. However in some cases, serious illness may be transmitted. Talk to your veterinarian if you have concerns.

## **Treatment of kennel cough**

There are vaccines that may prevent kennel cough or reduce the severity, but giving these vaccines to an animal who is already infected will not help the animal recover any quicker. All dogs are given these vaccines (DAPP and Bordatella) as they enter our facility. You may wish to talk to your veterinarian about vaccinating your dogs at home before introducing them to your new dog.

Kennel cough is usually manageable in a home. The BEST thing to do for a dog with kennel cough is provide them with a warm, stress-free home. In this environment most dogs will recover within a few weeks.

Sometimes antibiotics are used in treating kennel cough, and may help the dog recover from the disease. These medications can be obtained through your regular veterinarian. Severe, untreated cases of kennel cough can develop into pneumonia, so it is important to discuss kennel cough with your veterinarian.

## **When should I seek treatment for my dog?**

We recommend that all newly adopted dogs be seen by a veterinarian within a few days of adoption, for a routine health check. If any of your dogs develop a hacking cough, discharge from eyes and nose, lethargy or loss of appetite, you should make an appointment with your veterinarian.