

# Canine Influenza

August 2007

## **New outbreak**

A new outbreak of canine influenza at a veterinary clinic in the San Gabriel Valley has recently been reported. Serum tests, repeated twice on some dogs to look for rising antibody levels, confirm the infection. Approximately 20 dogs were involved in the outbreak. The majority of dogs in the outbreak have shown only mild symptoms.

## **What is it?**

Canine influenza is a relatively new virus that causes respiratory infection in dogs. It is believed to have jumped species from horses to racing greyhounds in Florida sometime before 2004, and then spread to dogs around the United States. Canine influenza was reported in 5 dogs in LA County in 2005, and was also reported in Oceanside in 2006, and in Colorado and Pennsylvania earlier this year. The virus might already be well “established” in Southern California.

## **What are the symptoms?**

The symptoms can look a lot like the common disease “kennel cough,” because coughing is the most common symptom. However, dogs with canine influenza are usually sick for a longer period (weeks), and are more likely to have a fever and nasal discharge, and to develop pneumonia. Most dogs develop the milder form of the disease (cough, mild fever). The fatality rate is low, about 1-5%.

## **How is it spread?**

Canine influenza is very easily spread from dog to dog. An infected dog can spread the virus for a day or so before acting sick. This makes it very difficult to prevent and stop outbreaks. Anything the dog coughs on or licks (bowls, blankets, toys etc) might also spread infection. People can accidentally spread canine flu when they touch an infected dog and then touch other dogs or objects before washing their hands.

## **Can people or cats catch it?**

No.

## **Is there a vaccine available against Canine Influenza?**

Not yet, but researchers are working on developing one.

## **Does the Bordetella (kennel cough) vaccine protect dogs against canine influenza?**

No. However, it is a good idea to protect your dog with all vaccines recommended by your veterinarian. Bordetella is still a common infection in dogs.

## **What should I do?**

Keep your dog up to date on all vaccines that your veterinarian recommends. Call your veterinarian if your dog develops a cough. If your dog is coughing, do not take it out to locations where it may infect other dogs. Keep it at home until it is well, or as directed by your veterinarian. Wash your hands well after handling any sick dog, especially before touching your own dog.

