

## Introduction

Kennel cough is a highly contagious yet common canine disease caused by a complex of viruses and the bacteria known as Bordetella. Kennel cough is irritating to dogs and to owners but **it is not fatal** nor is it contagious among animals other than dogs.

Dogs that have been boarded, groomed, or have spent time at a shelter or a Humane Society may contract this annoying disease. Newly adopted dogs and puppies are very likely to catch it.

## Symptoms

The main symptom is a dry, hacking cough followed by a gag. The cough sounds like your dog is trying to get something out of its throat. Occasionally dogs will spit up or stop eating.

If your dog stops eating, offer small amounts of bland but tempting foods every two hours. Good food choices are boiled chicken, boiled hamburger, or cooked rice. The food should not be seasoned or cooked with fat.

Most dogs recover from kennel cough without treatment in approximately two weeks.

## Concerns

**If your dog stops eating, spits up, or has green nasal discharge, he/she may need to be seen by a veterinarian.** If your dog is coughing continuously, cough suppressants might be needed. Contact the Shelter at (734) 662-5585 for assistance or the Clinic at (734) 662-4365 to make an appointment with a veterinarian.

## Treatment

If medication is necessary, treatment may include antibiotics and/or cough suppressants. Most puppies are put on antibiotics because of their immature immune systems.

## Cautions

**All dogs with kennel cough are contagious to other dogs.** Please try to keep your dog away from other dogs. If you have other dogs, make sure they are up-to-date on their Bordetella and Parainfluenza vaccines. These vaccines are given every 6 to 12 months depending on the amount of exposure your dog has to dogs in kennel situations.