



The Flu

Connie's Weekly Newsletter

The annual flu season is well underway and humans are not the only ones who have been known to become infected by a flu virus.

Canine Influenza Virus (CIV) is a contagious respiratory infection found in dogs and caused by the specific Type A (H3N8) influenza virus. CIV is a relatively new virus, and so almost all dogs are susceptible to infection when first exposed given that they have not yet built-up a natural immunity. If infected, dogs will generally experience mild, flu-like symptoms, however there have been more severe cases where treatment has been prescribed.

The virus was first discovered in racing greyhounds in 2004 and soon spread to boarding kennels and animal shelters. The H3N8 virus is a mutated version of an equine (horse) influenza virus and there is no evidence to suggest that the canine strand can infect people or other species. A total of 39 states have now had reported cases of CIV.

Fever, coughing, eye and nose discharge are all symptoms of the virus and can last up to two weeks. Veterinarians can diagnose a dog with a swab of the nose and throat. Keep in mind that symptoms of the dog flu can mimic that of kennel cough, another highly contagious respiratory disease commonly found in dogs. The challenge for shelters and animal welfare organizations is to recognize the appropriate symptoms, making sure the illness is properly diagnosed and treated, while preventing the spread.

Wherever dogs congregate, CIV can easily spread. Watch out for:

- Direct contact, such as when dogs kiss, lick or nuzzle each other
- Droplets in the air from a cough or sneeze
- Contaminated objects, such as doggie bowls, doorknobs or clothing
- The hands of pet owners, veterinary clinic staff and shelter workers

How to track and manage the spread of disease in your facility:

- Make sure you have sub-locations built into [PetPoint](#); you want to be able to run your reports showing who shared what kennel in the event of an outbreak
- In the conditions type in your medical module, make sure you have added CIV so you can track the virus and report on it if you suffer an outbreak
- Practice the proper hygiene measures put in place by your facility, including cleaning infected areas last

As a member of the [PetPoint](#) network, your adoption program is supported by our gift of insurance program which covers common illnesses and accidents for shelter pets. Last year, new pet adopters submitted a total of \$715,353 in [24PetWatch](#) Gift of Insurance claims for upper respiratory infections including CIV. Encouraging your new pet adopters to opt for this coverage and following the simple guidelines above can both reduce the return of unhealthy dogs to your shelter and help ensure a decrease in the spread of the disease.

Sincerely,

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