



Canine Influenza Transmission in Dogs: Risks and Prevention Strategies

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Description

Canine influenza, also known as dog flu is a respiratory illness caused by the influenza virus. The virus that causes canine influenza is divided into two types: H3N8 and H3N2. H3N8 was first identified in greyhounds in Florida in 2004, while H3N2 was first detected in dogs in South Korea in 2007. Both strains of the virus have since spread to other parts of the world, including the United States. Symptoms of canine influenza can vary from mild to severe and can include coughing, sneezing, fever, lethargy, loss of appetite, and nasal discharge. In severe cases, the virus can lead to pneumonia, which can be life-threatening, particularly in puppies or dogs with compromised immune systems. Prevention is the best approach to canine influenza. Vaccines are available for both H3N8 and H3N2 strains of the virus.

In addition to vaccination, dog owners can take other steps to protect their pets from canine influenza. They should avoid taking

their dogs to places where other dogs may be sick or exposed to the virus and they should wash their hands frequently and disinfect objects that may be contaminated with the virus. If a dog infected with canine influenza, treatment is focused on managing the symptoms and preventing secondary bacterial infections. In some cases, antiviral medication may be prescribed to help reduce the severity and duration of the illness.

There are some medications that may be used to treat canine influenza. Nonsteroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs) such as Rimadyl, Deramaxx, and Metacam can help reduce fever, inflammation, and pain. Antibiotics may be prescribed to prevent or treat secondary bacterial infections, which can occur as a result of a weakened immune system due to the virus. Examples of antibiotics include doxycycline, amoxicillin/clavulanic acid, and enrofloxacin. Cough suppressants may be used to help control coughing such as dextromethorphan and hydrocodone. Bronchodilators such as albuterol can help relax the airways and improve breathing. Antiviral medications such as oseltamivir may be used in severe cases or in high-risk dogs. An infected dog cannot be given any medication without first consulting a veterinarian. It can spread through direct contact, when an infected dog coughs or sneezes, releasing virus particles into the air. Another dog can become infected by inhaling these particles, or by coming into contact with the infected dog's saliva, nasal secretions, or eye discharge. The virus can also be spread through contaminated objects, such as food and water bowls, toys, and bedding. If an infected dog has come into contact with these items, other dogs that come into contact with them can become infected as well. Although it is rare, people can also transmit the virus from one dog to another. The virus can attach to clothing, hands, and other objects, and can be transmitted to other dogs if they come into contact with these items. Dogs that spend time in kennels, shelters, or other shared spaces are at a higher risk of contracting canine influenza, as the virus can easily spread in these environments. All infected dogs that are exposed to this virus will not become sick. It is important to contact veterinarian for advice on how to manage the illness and prevent its spread to other dogs.

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