

Kennel Cough in Dogs – Symptoms, Treatment & Prevention

By [AKC Staff](#)

What Is Kennel Cough?

Kennel Cough (also known as canine infectious tracheobronchitis) is a highly contagious respiratory disease. Dogs commonly contract kennel cough at places where large amounts of canines congregate, such as boarding and daycare facilities, dog parks, training groups, and dog shows. Dogs can spread it to one another through airborne droplets, direct contact (e.g., touching noses), or contaminated surfaces (including water/food bowls). It's highly treatable in most dogs but can be more severe in puppies younger than six months of age and immunocompromised dogs.

What are the Symptoms of Kennel Cough?

If your dog is affected with kennel cough, you may notice one or more of the following symptoms:

- a strong cough, often with a “honking” sound – this is the most obvious symptom
- runny nose
- sneezing
- lethargy
- loss of appetite
- low fever

Although kennel cough is easily treatable in healthy dogs, Kevin Fitzgerald, DVM, a columnist for [AKC Family Dog](#), explains that it's important to report a coughing symptom to your veterinarian because it could be a sign of a more serious [disease](#).

“The canine distemper virus and [canine influenza](#) virus both start off with symptoms nearly identical to kennel cough,” he said. Other conditions that can cause coughing include a [collapsing trachea](#), bronchitis, asthma, and even heart disease.



How Is Kennel Cough Treated?

Typically, mild cases of kennel cough are treated with a week or two of rest, but a veterinarian may prescribe antibiotics to prevent a secondary infection and cough medication to ease the symptoms.

“Nebulizers and vaporizers utilizing inhaled antibiotics or bronchodilators have been reported to be beneficial but are usually not prescribed,” Dr. Fitzgerald said. Speak to your veterinarian for treatment recommendations. Also, it’s helpful for owners to [use a harness](#) rather than a collar to walk a dog with kennel cough because irritation of the tracheal can aggravate the cough and possibly even cause damage to the trachea. If you have a household with multiple pets and one shows signs of a cough, chances are all dogs in the home have been exposed.

Can Kennel Cough Be Prevented?

[A vaccine](#) is available for the bordetella bacterium, which is the most common agent to cause kennel cough. Dogs who are frequently boarded, visit doggie day care, compete in canine sports, or otherwise are exposed to large groups of dogs may benefit from the vaccine, and many training, boarding, and daycare facilities require proof of vaccination. The vaccine is available in oral, intranasal, and injectable forms, and depending on the form, it is usually initially given in two doses two to four weeks apart, followed by a booster every six months to a year.

Although most cases of kennel cough are caused by bordetella, some are caused by other agents, including the bacteria bordetella bronchiseptica, canine adenovirus type 2, canine parainfluenza virus, canine respiratory coronavirus, and mycoplasmas, so the vaccine may not prevent your dog from catching the disease.

FRRRBABIEZ

Kennel Cough Acknowledgment

Please initial on all red lines:

Transmission: [redacted]

initial

Transmission is with direct contact between dogs and their bodily fluids (mouth and nose discharge). The virus can be shared by sneezing, coughing, breathing and shared objects. Kennel Cough is airborne.

Symptoms: [redacted]

initial

- dry cough
- gagging cough
- possible runny nose or nasal discharge

Treatment: [redacted]

initial

- in some dogs, it can resolve itself in 5-10 days
- antibiotics
- cough suppressant

Please, be aware that Kennel Cough does not start here. It is brought into our facility from dogs that have been exposed to other pets at a different time and are not yet showing symptoms. [redacted] (Initial) As always, we do everything within our ability to prevent our facility from getting Kennel Cough. [redacted] (Initial) FRRRBABIES requires the Bordetella vaccine to be updated every year, however this does not mean it is 100% effective. [redacted] (Initial) We use cleaning agents daily that are specifically designed to target Kennel Cough. [redacted] (Initial) Kennel cough has a 7 to 14 day incubation period so you may not know if your dog has it when you pick up, please message us on Facebook, email us, or give us a call letting us know your pup has contracted the virus so we are aware. [redacted] (Initial)

I understand that my dog could develop stress diarrhea either while here and/or when my dog arrives at home. Due to being away from owners or the noisy environment. [redacted] (Initial)

My dog could potentially get scratched during play either during group let out or by other family dog. We will do what we need to clean the wound and access it to see if it needs vet attention. Depending on the dog wounds may not be as visible as others. If they only go out alone due to owners request, there is no need to worry about this. [redacted] (Initial)

Client Signature

Date

Staff member Signature