



Lorrie Boldrick, D.V.M.
email: lb@barefootvet.com

Canine Influenza Virus

October 2009

Canine influenza virus is a newly identified (2005), contagious respiratory disease of dogs. This disease was first detected in Florida Greyhounds and has been migrating across the nation. It is highly contagious between dogs but does not infect humans.

Symptoms can include coughing, fever and nasal discharge. Symptoms may last from 1 to 3 weeks. A small proportion of dogs can develop more severe disease. Dogs that do not show symptoms may still shed the virus.

There is an approved vaccine for this disease which should be given prior to exposure to the disease. You only need this vaccine if your dog is likely to be exposed to lots of other dogs in enclosed situations.

Since the disease is viral, there is no specific treatment. If your dog shows suspicious symptoms, bring him into your veterinary clinic quickly for supportive care and antibiotic treatment for secondary bacterial infections. This disease can be fatal in a small percentage of cases.

At this time I don't recommend any major change in your normal routine with your dog. Do try to avoid places with large groups of dogs in enclosed places. Unfortunately, this may include boarding kennels and groomers. But, please, use some common sense. If your dog is groomed regularly, just try to leave him/her there as short a period of time as possible. If you must board your dog, ask that your dog spend as much time as possible in an outside run. The more air circulation there is, the more dilution of any viral particles that are coughed into the air. There should be no problem going to dog training classes that are held outside. But if you notice another dog in the class

coughing - stay away from it! The incubation period for canine influenza is 2-4 days, so you will quickly know if you were successful in avoiding problems.