

First identified in 2004, canine flu outbreaks have been detected in 30 states and the District of Columbia. While dogs of all ages and breeds are susceptible, the risk is even higher for those that:

- board in kennels
- go to pet stores
- come from shelters or rescue groups
- attend doggie daycare
- participate in dog shows
- go to grooming parlors
- congregate in parks and other gathering spots.
- are owned by rescue group members

Dog flu spreads much the same way as human flu – through direct contact, through the air by coughing or sneezing and via contaminated surfaces, such as hands, toys and clothing. Dogs with no signs of infection can spread the virus and often do not begin to cough until several days after they become contagious. One sick dog can cause an outbreak through an entire care facility.

Symptoms of canine influenza, often confused with kennel cough (*Bordetella*), include low-grade fever, runny nose, lack of energy, loss of appetite and a cough that can last for up to a month. About 80 percent of cases are mild. Another 20 percent, however, have more severe symptoms, including high fever and pneumonia. A small percentage die from complications associated with the disease. There is currently no specific treatment for dog flu other than supportive care. In some cases, secondary bacterial infections may cause further complications.

The flu shot is an initial series of 2 vaccines given 2-4 weeks apart. Then an annual booster is required. This needs to be given to your animal a week prior to boarding or grooming at our facility.