

Dogs Don't Get Hepatitis From People

Vaccination prevents canine hepatitis from spreading dog to dog.

By Jon Geller, DVM

Q. Can dogs be infected with hepatitis from the human form of the virus? Or is it passed dog to dog? Do you recommend the vaccine for dogs?

A. There is no risk of transmission of hepatitis between dogs and people. The form that dogs can get is completely different from the human version (Hepatitis B or C). Fortunately, canine viral hepatitis has largely been eliminated due to excellent vaccination coverage and the stability of the organism involved. It does not mutate the way canine parvovirus does, or for example, human influenza virus does.

Reports of any cases of viral hepatitis in dogs are rare. For these reasons, it is not considered a significant risk for transmission between dogs.

The vaccine for infectious canine hepatitis is included in almost every core combination vaccine given to dogs, and it is recommended for all dogs as a puppy vaccine that is repeated as several boosters, then as an annual vaccine. Some veterinarians are giving this vaccine on a three-year schedule in adult dogs to minimize the risk of vaccination reactions.

Dogs can get other forms of hepatitis, such as a bacterial infection, but these respond to antibiotic treatment and are not contagious.