

## Kennel Cough

**Ask the Vet's Leslie Sinclair, DVM explains how to identify and treat kennel cough.**

*Leslie Sinclair, DVM*

Q. What is kennel cough, and how do I know if my dog has it?

Leslie Sinclair, DVM says: Kennel cough is usually a fairly mild dog cold, and most cases are caused by the Bordetella bronchiseptica bacterium, but canine parainfluenza virus, adenovirus, and distemper virus also cause kennel cough symptoms. Most healthy dogs recover in about a week, with or without treatment, but this mild upper respiratory infection can take a nasty turn, so closely watch and carefully tend any dog with kennel cough.

The hallmark symptom of kennel cough is a honking cough that begins five to ten days after grooming, boarding, hospitalization, or any event that involved exposure to other dogs. For most dogs, this is the only symptom, and they continue to eat and play and otherwise appear to be healthy. Some dogs don't cough, however, and some run a fever, have a poor appetite, become lethargic, and have clear or yellow discharge from their eyes and/or nose. Dogs with mild symptoms generally do not need medical treatment, although cough suppressants make them feel better and antibiotics may be prescribed to treat the bacterial component of the disease and any secondary bacterial infection.

Your dog should receive vaccines against canine adenovirus, parainfluenza virus, and distemper virus as part of her core vaccine regimen. An injectable vaccine against Bordetella bronchiseptica is available, but a more effective vaccine is a nose drop that fights both Bordetella bronchiseptica and parainfluenza virus. This local vaccine interacts directly with the immune system cells in the nose and throat, which act as the first line of defense against a kennel cough infection, stimulating faster and stronger protection. The drawback, however, is that the nose drop vaccine does not last as long as the injectable. Dogs who regularly or occasionally spend time with other dogs require the intranasal kennel cough vaccine every six months. Be sure to keep your records updated.

- [Back to the General Health Area](#) - [Return to Ask the Vet About Dogs](#)

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