

Frequently Asked Questions: Canine Influenza (CIV)

WHAT IS CANINE INFLUENZA?

Canine Influenza is a respiratory virus in dogs. It is related to the Influenza (“flu”) virus that people get, however it only effects dogs. This means that you cannot catch Influenza from dogs. In dogs the virus can cause a severe cough, fever, and nasal discharge. It is very contagious and spreads in the air like flu and COVID-19 in people. Symptoms include hacking cough, lethargy, decreased appetite, fever, runny nose/discharge.

HOW IS IT TREATED?

There are no medications approved to treat Canine Influenza. It is treated with supportive care as needed. Antibiotics are also used, but they do not treat Influenza itself. Rather, the antibiotics prevent or treat secondary bacterial pneumonia, which Influenza predisposes dogs to. When treated with antibiotics to prevent or treat bacterial pneumonia, the fatality rate is only about 1%.

IF I ADOPT OR FOSTER A DOG THAT IS COUGHING, DO YOU PROVIDE TREATMENT?

Yes. You will be sent home with a round of antibiotics that must be given by mouth daily until gone. Do not stop giving the meds early, even if the dog is no longer showing symptoms. Staff may or may not need to provide more instructions specific to the individual dog you choose.

CAN YOU PROVIDE TREATMENT TO MY OTHER DOG IF IT GETS INFLUENZA?

No. Tulsa Animal Welfare cannot legally provide medical care, advice, or reimbursement for the care of your other personal pets. We are not a private vet clinic and cannot treat any animals not in our custody. If you see any concerning symptoms, you are responsible for seeking care through your private veterinarian. Do NOT use medications dispensed for one dog to treat a different animal.

HOW CAN I PROTECT MY PETS AND AVOID SPREADING INFLUENZA?

To help prevent bringing Canine Influenza home to your own dog, you should: disinfect your shoes, change clothes, and wash your hands and arms. Do this all before you cross paths with your own dogs. The virus can live on your clothes and skin for about a day, so taking these precautions will help to prevent spreading it among the community or to your dogs.

IS THERE A VACCINE FOR CANINE INFLUENZA?

Yes. Since the virus is now in our community, you should also strongly consider getting your dog vaccinated for canine influenza. The vaccine is a two shot series. The shots are given two to four weeks apart. There are two strains of canine influenza (H3N8 and H3N2). The vaccine the covers both is called “bivalent”. You want to ask your vet for the bivalent vaccine.

IS IT STILL SAFE TO ADOPT, VOLUNTEER, OR FOSTER A SHELTER PET?

Whether it is safe to foster, volunteer, or adopt depends on your personal situation, the health of your current pets, and you have to make that decision. If you do not have dogs at home, then you don't have to worry about bringing it home to other animals. If you do have dogs at home, you should consider getting them vaccinated whether or not you choose to foster, volunteer, or adopt because the virus is in our community and will likely continue to be. Healthy adult dogs are at least risk of severe complications or severe illness from Canine Influenza. Similar to people, the very young, sick, or old dogs are at highest risk of severe complications or death. This is something to think about if you have dogs at home and are considering fostering, volunteering, or adopting.