

Vaccination Protocols for Home Boarding and Day Care

Kennel Cough Vaccine – is it worth it?

B = Bordetella. Bordetella Bronchiseptica is a bacterium that causes respiratory disease in dogs. It is one of the most common bacterial causes of canine infectious tracheobronchitis, which is also sometimes called Kennel Cough.

Bordetella is highly contagious, easily transmitted through direct contact or the air, and resistant to destruction in the environment. Though not considered a core vaccine, Bordetella vaccine may be recommended for dogs whose lifestyle places them at greater risk of contracting the disease. This includes dogs that are boarded frequently and mix with other dogs regularly.

Kennel Cough is the equivalent of the human cold, some dogs can be very poorly whilst others cough twice and the illness is over. Although the vaccination is not perfect, as like a cold, there are many strains for the bacteria, the vaccine does offer a level of protection and often if Kennel Cough is present in the area, the dogs will only suffer mild symptoms instead of a full blown dose of Kennel Cough when they are vaccinated.

Kennel Cough in a day care / boarding establishment can be very serious, and can be difficult to bring under control if you have many dogs that visit throughout the week.

Kennel Cough is airborne and highly contagious, which is why it can spread quickly through groups of dogs staying in close quarters. **It is also transmitted with bacteria on toys, food bowls or other shared objects.**

A thorough clean down of all areas with a veterinary grade virucidal disinfectant is required to remove the risk presented to other dogs.

A dog's respiratory system is designed to protect against the invasion of infection, but certain situations and environments leave them more vulnerable to illness.

The most obvious symptom of Kennel Cough is a forceful, hacking cough, which will often sound like your dog has something stuck in their throat. The cough can be dry and hoarse or productive, in which case it can be followed by a gag, swallowing motion or the production of mucus. It is distinct from a cough-like sound known as reverse sneezing, which is common in certain breeds and is triggered by irritation in the throat. This sound can often be mistaken for a cough, choking fit, sneezing, retching or gasping for breath.

Kennel Cough has an incubation period of 2 to 14 days, and some dogs can be carriers of the infection for months without developing symptoms. Initiating a protocol if symptoms are seen in dogs in your care is very important.

Day care dogs should not return to day care until at least 5 days after coughing has stopped, and boarding dogs should be kept isolated for this period.

You may take your dog to the vet annually to have vaccinations, but this does not mean that they are being given all boosters at every visit. Each vaccination has a different expiry period (or shelf life) and your vet will only give your dog the required boosters in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations.

If you have any questions about your dog's vaccinations it is important to talk to your vet. Your vet can give you guidance which is specific to your dog's age, lifestyle and medical status. Vaccinations or titer testing are required in order for you to use the services of a licensed home boarder.