

## Kennel cough (acute tracheobronchitis)

Kennel cough is not a serious disease in most otherwise healthy dogs. However, it is very contagious and will spread rapidly around the dog population. As its name suggests, it causes coughing that can go on up to six weeks in some cases.

**Kennel cough is caused by a combination of viruses and bacteria including:**

- Canine parainfluenzavirus
- Canine adenovirus
- Bordetella bronchiseptica

These agents get into the body and cause irritation to the windpipe resulting in coughing. It is called kennel cough because it is so infectious that if one dog in a kennel gets it the cough will spread rapidly through the rest of the dogs there.

### Vaccinating

- *Many cases seen with 'Kennel Cough' have never been in kennels! Therefore it is always a good idea to vaccinate.*
- Good kennels will insist that your dog is vaccinated against this disease before agreeing to take them for boarding. This is to prevent the spread of the disease through other dogs in the kennel. Even if your dog is fit and healthy and would not suffer as a result of catching kennel cough, there may be older or more vulnerable dogs staying in the kennels at the same time.
- The protection given by the specific kennel cough vaccinations when they are administered into the nose (intranasal) lasts 12 months. It may therefore be wise to separate this vaccination from your dog's routine boosters.
- Many kennels prefer that the vaccination is given around 14 days before the animal is admitted to kennels so make sure you arrange this in plenty of time.

### Signs

- A dry hacking cough
- Some may have a temperature
- Lethargic
- Not keen on their food

### Diagnosis

Your vet will probably know what is wrong with your dog from your description of the symptoms. Further tests may not be required, but if concerned your vet may suggest chest xrays.

### Treatment

- Anti-inflammatories
- In some cases antibiotics are prescribed
- Cough linctus or child's cough syrup may lessen the severity of the cough
- Feeding wet food or soaking your dog's normal dry food will make it easier for them to eat
- Kennel cough is extremely contagious and you should avoid socialising with other dogs for at least a few weeks after an infection
- If your dog wears a collar, try a harness to take any pressure off their throat
- Try to keep them in a warm environment and don't over exercise them