



Canine Influenza FAQ

7/2/2017

We are now carrying the bivalent Merck H3N2/H3N8 Canine Influenza vaccine at our hospitals. This email is to give you information to help you decide whether this vaccination is appropriate to your dog(s). **This is NOT a core vaccine**, and we do not recommend it for routine use in all dogs! **A current outbreak of H3N2 influenza in some states involving certain populations has prompted us to make it available for dogs at potential risk.**

As some of our clients are aware, there is a **current outbreak of H3N2 Canine Influenza occurring predominantly in the southeastern United States.** The biggest concern for circulation has been among show dogs over the last 1-2 months – transmission at a large dog show in Georgia apparently set up a chain of smaller outbreaks that thus far has affected dogs in Georgia, Tennessee, Texas, Florida, Kentucky and New York. Other states and dogs are likely also impacted – delays in testing results and limited testing of coughing dogs makes surveillance difficult. **Show dogs, their housemates, dogs from boarding kennels, and dogs in contact with those dogs have been infected.**

Canine influenza in many dogs causes typical kennel cough signs. The virus is extremely contagious, and close to 100% of exposed dogs can be infected. 20-25% will show minimal to no symptoms. Most dogs develop coughing and sneezing, some will require antibiotics for secondary infections or pneumonia, and several deaths have occurred in the current outbreak. In a 2015 outbreak in Chicago, the **mortality rate was estimated to be 0.5%.**

Canine influenza outbreaks in the past have been localized and have burned out quickly. **This outbreak's emergence in the show dog population is somewhat more worrisome because show dogs travel across state lines, meet in very large groups in confined areas, and then return home to mingle with housemates and neighbor dogs.** Dogs who are infected are contagious BEFORE showing any symptoms, and dogs who never develop symptoms can still be contagious. This outbreak has the potential to spread through a large geographical area, and has already traveled across much of the Eastern half of the country.

The risk to the average house dog is very very low. So which dogs should be vaccinated for influenza? This depends to some degree on your risk tolerance and largely on your dogs' exposure potential. **We currently recommend vaccination for the highest risk dogs, and recommend thoughtful consideration in "some risk" dogs (see below.) It is not unreasonable to vaccinate dogs in the "lower risk" category, but that is owner's**

preference as at this time no H3N2 has been reported in Washington during this outbreak. As outlined below, vaccination does take time to complete and to become effective, so plan ahead.

Highest Risk:

- Show and performance dogs who will be traveling out of state to compete
- Dogs who will go to training facilities out of state
- Housemates of these dogs

Some risk:

- Show and performance dogs who attend local shows/events/trainings
- Their housemates

Lower/potential risk:

- Dogs who go to regular training classes and boarding kennels (if H3N2 is verified in Washington, we will elevate this level of risk.)

Minimal risk:

- House dogs
- Dogs who are walked on leash and rarely mix face-to-face with other dogs

We have elected to vaccinate with the killed bivalent vaccine (H3N2 strain AND H3N8 strain) because it is possible that area boarding kennels may begin to require vaccination if a local outbreak occurs. Generally kennels have required both strains if any are required, and we prefer not to require four separate injections for our patients.

The vaccine is labeled for dogs and puppies 7wk and older. **It is an initial two injection series, with the second (booster) injection given 2-4 weeks after the first. Best protection will require two weeks after the second injection;** vaccination should therefore be initiated at least 5 weeks before exposure. Boosters will be required yearly.

The vaccine will NOT fully prevent infection or give sterilizing immunity – **dogs who are vaccinated and exposed will more likely have no to mild clinical signs, but vaccinated dogs can still transmit disease to others if infected. This is why we recommend vaccination for housemates of high risk dogs as well.**

If you feel your dog would benefit from this vaccine, please [CLICK HERE](#) to schedule an appointment or call our hospitals.

Redmond-Kirkland Animal Hospital

7251 W Lake Sammamish Pkwy NE
Redmond, WA 98052
www.redmondkirklandveterinary.com
425-882-8000 p

Redmond-Fall City Animal Hospital

24326 NE Redmond-Fall City Rd

Redmond, WA 98053

www.redmondsammamishveterinary.com

425-868-8008 p