



We would like all of our dog owners to be aware that there have been an increase in the number of dogs with 'kennel cough' presenting throughout the province.

Kennel cough is an umbrella term that describes a deep cough in dogs caused by a number of infectious agents (viruses and bacteria). Sometimes multiple agents are present at the same time. It is spread through the air when an infected dog coughs or it can be carried on objects the dog may have been in contact with such as toys, food bowls etc. It can also be spread through nose-to-nose or mouth-to-mouth contact when dogs interact or play with each other.

In most cases the cough will resolve on its own with time (usually within a week); however in a few cases the cough will persist for more than a week, and in some rare cases it may progress to something more serious, such as pneumonia.

Dogs with weaker immune systems (puppies, very old

dogs, dogs on steroids or chemotherapy etc.) are at higher risk for developing pneumonia.

Both the core distemper vaccine and the *Bordetella* (ie. kennel cough) vaccine protect against some of these agents that cause kennel cough. However, there are a number of agents for which we cannot vaccinate; and no vaccine is 100% effective, so even vaccinated dogs may still be susceptible to contracting kennel cough. The current outbreak does not seem to be associated with *Bordetella*.

However, we advise all owners whose dogs frequent grooming or boarding facilities, dog daycares, dog parks etc. that they make sure their dog's vaccines are current. If your dog develops a cough, stay away from high traffic dog areas.

If your dog develops a deep cough that persists, has a decrease in appetite, has a fever, or has other symptoms that worry you, make an appointment with your veterinarian. There are a number of different treatments that may be prescribed depending on the dog's symptoms. It is also important to note that there are other diseases that can cause your dog to cough, and your veterinarian can determine if there is anything else that warrants attention.