

January 1, 2015

Welcome back, fellow dog enthusiasts! We hope that everyone had a safe and happy holiday season! Unfortunately, all of the holiday gatherings have left some of us with the sniffles. This all too common fact of socialization can affect your furry friends as well. Have you noticed that your dog's eyes are a little crusty or maybe they're exhibiting a bit of a dry cough? It's very important to be aware of your pet's health and know when to give them a sick day.

As I'm sure you are well aware, winter time for many equals illness. This can also be true for our canine companions. Due to the obvious need to keep homes and facilities closed up to maintain the warmth, many viruses and bacteria are able to thrive. This edition will focus on kennel cough or bordetella.

Bordetella, also known as canine tracheobronchitis, is extremely contagious. It is an upper respiratory disease that is most commonly caused by the parainfluenza virus. Just as human colds may be caused by many different viruses, kennel cough itself can have multiple causes. Although kennel cough can sound terrible, most of the time it is not a serious condition. Symptoms may vary from dog to dog. First signs usually include a dry cough, watery eyes, runny nose, and lethargy. Some dogs may vomit or develop a wet cough which may be a sign of a secondary infection. This disease can be spread through the air and through contact. It can be transferred from your clothing, so sanitization is key to prevention. How do you prevent your dog from getting kennel cough?

The only way to keep your dog from getting kennel cough is to keep them from having contact with other dogs. That's a silly solution, in our opinion. Dogs are extremely social animals that need interactions with their own species. Luckily, there are other options. The best is keeping your dog up to date on the bordetella vaccine. At our facility we require it to be updated every six months. Why did we make this a requirement? We have made it a priority to keep our facility disease free. By requiring the bordetella vaccine to be administered every six months we are maintaining localized immunity in all of the dogs in our care. This greatly reduces the incidence of clinical signs and illness. We have also made the intranasal vaccine available at our facility for the convenience of our clients. After your dog receives the vaccine they will not be able to socialize with other dogs for at least 72 hours. This is due to the fact that the vaccine is a modified live virus. Your dog will be shedding the virus and able to infect others with a mild form of kennel cough for the first few days after administration. After the 72 hour wait your dog will be able to resume socialization as usual.

What can you do to help us keep Sit, Stay, N' Play kennel cough free? The most important thing is to keep your dog updated on their vaccinations. The second most important is to be aware of your dogs' health. If they don't seem to be feeling themselves, they've vomited, have a cough, or runny eyes, then please let them take a sick day. If you bring them in for boarding or daycare while they are sick you are not only exacerbating the issue, but the illness will spread and affect other dogs. We will continue to do our part by maintaining our high cleanliness standards at Sit, Stay, N' Play. We strive to keep your pets healthy and happy. We hope you all have a warm and healthy winter!