



## Important Update Regarding Canine Flu

### *Summary:*

- *Canine Influenza is a highly contagious disease that is in 30 states with highest incidence in Florida, Colorado, and the Northern East coast. Though not in Missouri, we fear it is a matter of time for cases to be confirmed in our state.*
- *Symptoms include nasal discharge, coughing, sneezing, fever, ocular discharge, and lethargy.*
- *We are recommending vaccine to dogs that are most likely exposed. The vaccine costs \$22.50 and needs to be repeated in 2-4 weeks after the first injection, then annually.*

Canine Influenza, H3N8, is a respiratory virus that is of concern due to its infectious nature, its growing numbers, and its clinical symptoms. Presently this disease has not been confirmed in Missouri, but has been confirmed in 30 states. The states with the highest incidence of disease are Florida, Colorado, New York, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Nevada, Virginia, and Kentucky.

Symptoms are similar to other respiratory diseases: nasal discharge, coughing, sneezing, fever, ocular discharge and lethargy.

Spread of the disease can occur 48 hours before clinical symptoms. Transmission can be direct contact, usually coughing or sneezing. It can also be indirect because the virus can live on clothing, surfaces, toys, and in water bowls for 12-48 hours.

Due to the relative newness of this disease, dogs have no natural immunity to the virus. That means all dogs exposed to the virus for the first time will become infected with the disease. Eighty percent (80%) of infections are mild. Of these, twenty percent (20%) show no clinical signs, but still shed and spread the virus. Twenty percent (20%) of clinical infections are a severe form that usually require hospitalization and aggressive medical treatment. There have been deaths of pneumonia reported from Canine Influenza, H3N8.

There is a vaccine available that combats the spread of this disease by reducing the severity of symptoms and reduces the viral shedding time from 5 days in non-vaccinated dogs to 2 days in vaccinated dogs.

The vaccine has very few side effects. We are recommending this vaccine for dogs that are scheduled to travel outside the state, especially Florida, Colorado, New York, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Nevada, Virginia, and Kentucky. We recommend vaccination if your pet travels to areas where many dogs from other areas of the country are going to be, such as dog shows and boarding kennels.

Dogs in contact with other dogs will be the first affected. This contact includes boarding, grooming, day care, dog parks, and shelters.

The cost for this vaccine is \$22.50 per injection. Initial protection requires two (2) vaccinations given 2-4 weeks apart, and annually thereafter.

As your veterinary clinic we are watching carefully for outbreaks in Missouri. We will update you via this e-mail address as information presents. Our conversations with the University of Missouri confirm this vaccination is safe and effective, and that the threat is real.

In summary, this disease warrants recommendation for vaccination based on individual life style.

Our policy at Barrett Station Veterinary Clinic regarding vaccination for Canine Influenza, H3N8, is as follows:

- If you have plans to have your dog travel to Florida, Colorado, New York, Nevada, Kentucky, Virginia, or Delaware, he or she should be vaccinated 2-4 weeks apart with the second vaccine having been given at least 1 week before travel.
- If your dog goes to dog shows, boarding kennels, day care, or grooming facilities, you should strongly consider vaccination against Canine Influenza.

If you have any questions regarding this disease or vaccination, please call us at 314-822-2882.

The veterinarians at Barrett Station Veterinary Clinic,  
*Dr. Caroline Gilje*  
*Dr. Laura Pletz*  
*Dr. Lynn Pullen*  
*Dr. Victoria Knight*  
*Dr. John Pletz*