



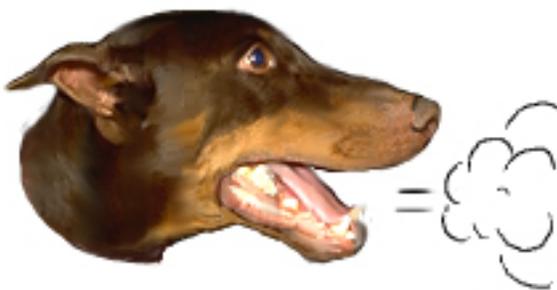
## Infectious Tracheobronchitis, Upper Respiratory Infections and Coughing Dogs

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### **What is Infectious Tracheobronchitis or 'Kennel Cough'?**

Infectious tracheobronchitis (ITB) or 'Kennel Cough' is a broad term covering any contagious or infectious upper respiratory condition of dogs where coughing is one of the major clinical signs. Occasionally, sneezing and nasal discharge may be the prominent sign. The term *tracheobronchitis* describes the location of the infection in trachea ('windpipe') and bronchial tubes of the lungs. Several viruses and bacteria can cause 'kennel cough', often at the same time. These include adenovirus, parainfluenza virus, and the bacterium *Bordetella bronchiseptica*. The infection spreads by direct dog-to-dog or airborne contact when dogs congregate or are housed together (think of children in a day care...). ITB/Kennel Cough is often seen after dogs have been to the groomer, dog parks, or kennels, hence the name "kennel cough". Stress and constant barking which are common in grooming parlors and boarding kennels also predispose dogs to ITB. Dogs that receive the Bordetella (Kennel Cough) vaccine are only protected against *Bordetella bronchiseptica*; there are many other contagious upper respiratory 'bugs' that can cause similar symptoms

At Grace Animal Hospital and Pet Lodge, we work hard to ensure a clean, disease-free facility, screen all coughing dogs, and we require vaccination prior to boarding. However, we can't 100% prevent an infectious respiratory disease from entering our hospital or Pet Lodge



### **What are the clinical signs of ITB/kennel cough other than coughing?**

Canine ITB is considered to be among the most common infectious respiratory disease in dogs. Clinical signs vary, and most often it is a mild disease, however in some dogs the cough may be chronic, lasting for weeks. Common clinical signs include a loud, repetitive dry cough often described as a "goose honk", runny eyes and nose, swollen tonsils, wheezing, lack of appetite and depressed behavior. In many cases, dogs will repeatedly cough once or twice as if to clear

their throat then gag or spit-up, often mistaken as vomiting. Most cases of infectious tracheobronchitis have an elicitable cough that occurs when the throat is firmly pinched. Recently, a sneezing variant has been noted in the Midlands where dogs begin sneezing several times a day and may have a runny nose.

Because coughing and sneezing may be a sign of disease other than ITB/Kennel Cough, it is important for our veterinarians to examine your dog if you note a persistent cough or sneeze and especially if they appear lethargic or sick.

### ***Is ITB/Kennel Cough contagious to my other pets or family?***

Although very uncommon, *Bordetella bronchiseptica* pneumonia has been reported in humans. There is also some research showing it may be passed to or from cats. However, it is important to remember that ITB/Kennel Cough is a syndrome and not always the result of the bacterium *Bordetella bronchiseptica*.

### ***What is the treatment for ITB/Kennel Cough?***

Like the Common Cold in humans, there is no specific treatment for the viral infections other than supportive care (See below). However since severe signs may be due to bacterial involvement, particularly *Bordetella bronchiseptica*, antibiotics may be useful. Some cases require prolonged treatment, but most infections resolve within one to two weeks. Mild clinical signs may linger even when the bacteria have been eliminated. Vaccination in the face of an outbreak or during the early signs of infection is often successful

### ***How can I prevent my dog contracting Kennel Cough?***

Grace Animal Hospital recommends annual vaccination for Bordetella, especially for those dogs visiting groomers, dog parks, dog shows or boarding kennels. In puppies and naïve dogs (those never vaccinated for Bordetella) we recommend an intranasal vaccine followed by an injectable booster in 3-4 weeks. Otherwise, we recommend dogs receive the vaccine annually, if you board frequently some veterinarians recommend Bordetella vaccination every 6 months. Research continues on which type of vaccine, intranasal or injectable provides the best protection. Immunity, even if the dog has experienced a natural infection, is neither solid nor long-lasting. As with any vaccine, vaccination does not guarantee 100% protection especially for Bordetella since there are several infectious agents that may cause the disease. However, like the human flu vaccine, if dogs are vaccinated for ITB/Kennel Cough and they do get the disease, it is usually a milder, shorter-lasting illness. For high risk dogs, our veterinarians may even recommend vaccination as frequent as every 6 months.

### **Treatment for ITB/Kennel Cough**

1. Rest and lots of fresh water
2. Avoid tugging on your dog's collar with a leash as the slightest irritation can elicit a cough. If necessary, use a harness or slip the leash over one shoulder
3. Anti-inflammatories: **Aspirin** -> 5-10mg per pound of body weight once daily. We recommend children's aspirin (81mg) or Malox coated aspirin (Ascriptin 325mg) **Do NOT use Tylenol or Ibuprofen!**
4. Antitussives (Cough Medication): **Robitussin DM** or generic equivalent. 1mg per pound of body weight by mouth every 6-8hours.
5. Although difficult to find, Children's Afrin nasal drops twice a day can help alleviate sneezing.
6. Benedryl 1-2mg per pound of body weight every 8-12hours
7. Avoid nose-to-nose contact with other dogs until coughing stops if possible.
8. If coughing persists for more than a few days, please schedule an examination as coughing can also be a sign of other diseases such as heart failure

### **OTHER INSTRUCTIONS:**

