

Bordetella (Kennel Cough)

Reprinted from Bulltales, Phoenix Bulldog Club, Jan 2000,
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Bordetella (Kennel Cough) in dogs is similar to the common cold in humans. Although this disease is rarely fatal, it can lead to other diseases such as pneumonia, which can shorten your dog's life. Kennel cough occurs more commonly in puppies and young adult dogs, and in dogs that have recently been in shelters or exposed to many other dogs. Since an airborne virus causes kennel cough, normal cleaning and surface disinfecting cannot eliminate the cause. Kennel Cough can occur with Distemper, Adenovirus Type Two, Parainfluenza and other respiratory infections. Antibiotics can prevent or cure a secondary infection. Cough suppressants can be used to control the cough. To help prevent pneumonia or other diseases, dogs with Kennel Cough should be kept in a warm environment. Keep infected dogs away from other dogs to prevent further transmission of any disease. Like the common cold, Kennel Cough cannot be cured but it has to run its course. Symptoms include harsh dry (honking) cough that is often followed by gagging and coughing up foamy mucous, with nasal discharge of clear turning to milky white, and then to green. Most infected dogs do NOT have a fever and otherwise the dog appears alert and generally healthy. Vaccination is minimally effective. There are some 40 plus strains of Kennel Cough and the vaccination provides protection against approximately 12. However, if your dog is to be shown, kenneled, or around a number of other dogs it is wise to have your dog vaccinated. The intranasal vaccine is pretty fast acting, providing some protection in as little as 5 days. The injectable version of the vaccine may provide longer immunity. Some vets use both to get maximum protection. Please do not assume that any cough is Kennel Cough. If your dog has a fever, is less active than normal, has a decreased appetite, has a discharge from the eyes and nose, has difficulty breathing or is older than 3 years, the above named symptoms are signs of a more serious problem and you need to see a veterinarian as soon as possible.