



## Canine Influenza Virus

Due to the increase of canine influenza cases in the region, we will begin requiring all campers to have **full immunity by March 1<sup>st</sup> of 2018**

- **Both H3N2 and H3N8 are contagious respiratory diseases found in dogs.**
  - The H3N2 canine influenza strain evolved from the avian influenza, while the H3N8 canine influenza evolved from the equine influenza.
- **Neither H3N2 or H3N8 have shown any potential to be passed on to humans**
  - The H3N2 virus has been diagnosed in a few cats.
- **Symptoms include:** Cough, Runny Nose, Fever, Lethargy, Eye Discharge, and Reduced Appetite. While the canine flu is rarely fatal, the disease leaves the dogs immune system vulnerable for more serious illnesses to develop such as pneumonia. Puppies and senior dogs are far more likely to be impacted by canine influenza because of their age.
- **Both strands of canine influenza are more likely to be contracted in areas with higher dog traffic such as dog parks, boarding kennels, shelters, and daycare facilities**
  - Infected dogs can pass the virus along through respiratory secretions such as barking, coughing, and sneezing. Uninfected dogs can contract the virus by coming in contact with contaminated objects such as clothing, equipment, surfaces, and human interaction.
- **There are vaccines that cover H3N2 and H3N8 respectively, as well as a bivalent vaccine that covers both.**
  - The vaccine is given in two segments: The initial vaccine is given and after a two to four week waiting period, a second injection is administered. After the second injection at least two weeks must pass before full immunity is provided.

### What is Canine Influenza?

Canine Influenza also known as dog flu, is a contagious respiratory disease caused by a strain of influenza viruses known to infect dogs. Currently there are two strains of the virus being investigated by veterinarians, the H3N2 virus and the H3N8 virus. Currently there is no evidence or cases suggesting that the canine influenza virus can be transmitted to humans. However, much like the human flu, the virus is constantly changing and that may be a possibility down the line.

Researchers believe the H3N8 canine influenza virus originated in horses. In 2004, cases of an unknown respiratory illness in dogs were reported in the United States. Scientists believe the virus jumped species, from horse to dog, and has adapted to cause and spread illness amongst dogs in higher population areas such as dog parks, kennels, daycares, and shelters. As of September 2005 the H3N8 virus was considered to be dog specific. The H3N8 virus has since

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spread through a good portion of the United States. Massachusetts specifically began seeing cases in 2011.

The H3N2 canine influenza virus is an avian flu virus that has adapted to infect dogs. Different from the human seasonal H3N2 viruses, H3N2 canine influenza was first detected in dogs in South Korea in 2007 and subsequently was spread to China and other surrounding countries. In April of 2015, a rapid outbreak of the H3N2 virus took place in Chicago infecting thousands of dogs. The H3N2 virus proceeded to spread westward throughout the United States for the most part avoiding the New England area until more recently.

### **Symptoms:**

The symptoms of canine influenza in dogs can vary depending on the age and overall of the health of the pet. Generally, dogs can have any combination of the following symptoms: cough, runny nose, fever, lethargy, eye discharge, and reduced appetite. Dogs may also be asymptomatic, showing no sign of illness while being contagious. While dogs rarely pass from canine flu, the disease can lower the pet's immune system making them more susceptible more to severe illnesses such as pneumonia.

### **The Spread and Treatment:**

While all dogs are susceptible to the canine flu, the disease tends to be spread in areas with higher populations of dogs, such as; kennels, shelters, dog parks, and daycare facilities. Canine flu is spread to other dogs by respiratory secretions such as coughing, sneezing, and barking. Uninfected dogs can be exposed to the disease by coming in contact with contaminated objects like clothing, equipment, surfaces, or human contact.

Currently there are a few different vaccines that helps prevent your dog from contracting canine flu. There are two individual vaccines that cover the H3N2 and H3N8 strains respectively. In addition, there is a bivalent vaccine that covers both. The vaccine is given in two segments: The initial vaccine is given and after a two to four week waiting period, a second injection is administered. After the second injection at least two weeks must pass before full immunity is provided. The canine influenza vaccine does not contain the preservatives Thiomersal or Thimerosal, which are known to cause adverse side effects in some pets. There are no known side effects for the vaccine as of today.

### **Where Does Western Massachusetts Fit in?**

Up until the fall of 2017, canine flu has not made much of an impact in the Western Massachusetts dog community. However, local veterinarians are starting to see a few cases come through their doors. At Camp Wintergreen we pride ourselves on providing a safe, healthy and fun experience for all of our campers and it is for this reason we would like to keep you informed

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on this situation. While our hope is that the canine flu will remain relatively dormant in this area, we feel it is best to air on the side of caution when it comes to the safety of the pets in our care. **It is for this reason that we are requiring that all campers have completed the canine flu vaccination process by March 1<sup>st</sup> of 2018.**

**If you have any questions about the canine flu, please feel free to ask you camp counselor. The information above is curtesy of the Center for Disease Control, you can find additional information at any of these following links:**

**American Veterinary Medical Association:**

<https://www.avma.org/KB/Resources/Reference/Pages/Canine-Influenza-Backgrounder.aspx>

**Center for Disease Control:**

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/canineflu/keyfacts.htm>

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