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**What is Kennel Cough?**

**Written by Dr. Melanie Turner – All Pet Complex**

Kennel cough is an infection of the trachea or windpipe. Because the trachea becomes irritated from the infection, it causes a cough, which can be either productive or dry. It is not a simple disease to categorize because it can be caused by a variety of disease agents including parainfluenza virus, canine adenovirus type 2, canine distemper virus, canine herpes virus, canine reovirus, and a bacteria called bordetella bronchiseptica. Often a virus infection affects the dog originally, but the dog can get a secondary bacterial infection with bordetella bronchiseptica, making your pet more sick. Kennel cough is a disease in which the dog can get better without treatment, though antibiotics often speed up recovery. It can progress to pneumonia, in which the dog gets a fever, stops eating and becomes severely ill. These cases need to be hospitalized for treatment.

**If my dog is vaccinated, why are they coughing when they come home?**

The kennel cough vaccine protects against bordetella bronchiseptica and parainfluenza. There is also a vaccine that covers distemper and canine adenovirus type 2, but not against any of the other agents. Vaccines strengthen the immune system, but it does not mean a dog is 100% resistant to a disease. Vaccines often lessen the severity and duration of the disease.

**If my dog is coughing after being boarded, what should I do?**

Always seek veterinary attention. They will be able to listen to the heart and lungs to ensure there isn’t a bigger problem, take a temperature, and evaluate how sick the dog is. Antibiotics are often prescribed in order to shorten the course of the illness and help to prevent progression to pneumonia. The disease can persist for up to 3 weeks, so they should not go to any boarding or grooming facility until 3 weeks after the clinical signs were first seen.

***All Pet Complex . 7660 Horseshoe Bend Rd. Boise, ID 83714 . (208)853-1000***