**Understanding Canine Cough**

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One of the most common ailments to strike our canine counterparts is often referred to as kennel cough.

Kennel cough or canine cough, is most often characterized by a deep throated cough, which many dog owners describe as sounding as though the dog has something stuck in its throat. In print it looks something like this: Cough, cough, cough-hack. And the hack can include the expulsion of a foamy mucous.

Just like kids going to school, germs go right along with them.

“If you give your dog the Bordetella vaccine, either through nasal drops or injection, it will be protected from the particular strains in the vaccine itself, but not necessarily from all contagious coughs in general,” “In addition, there are several variations of the Bordetella strains. Vaccines cannot include every strain. They can only contain the most common strains. Think about it like our flu vaccine. Some people receive this vaccine and still get sick.”

The tricky part for pet care professionals and owners alike is that a dog can have canine cough, but not yet be coughing or can even remain asymptomatic all together. That means a dog can come to the dog park, for example, play and act completely normal, but another dog may catch a bug from that dog and actually develop full symptoms.

So yes, your dog can be fully vaccinated and healthy as a horse, but still contract canine cough.

Take logical precautions. Do get the Bordetella vaccine. Even if it doesn’t totally protect your dog, it can help boost your dog’s immunity and hopefully lessen symptoms and duration of the infection if your dog does become ill.

A mild case of canine cough will often go away on its own within seven to 10 days.

Does your dog need to see the veterinarian? You may first want to see if your dog is running a temperature. A normal temperature for a dog should range between 100.5 to 102.5 degrees.

If your pet’s coughing is excessive, accompanied by a fever, loss of appetite or any nasal discharge, you should call your veterinarian

Antibiotics are not always necessary in the treatment of canine cough, just as they are not generally used in treating a mild cold in humans.

“However, if the patient is extremely young with a naive immune system, elderly, sickly or at risk of the infection progressing into pneumonia, then antibiotics may be necessary.”

The good news is that in healthy dogs with uncompromised immune systems, it appears that regular socialization helps to build natural immunity to many of the common strains of canine cough. Yes, interaction with other dogs is still a good thing.

At the end of the day, if your dog develops a little cough, but is otherwise healthy and normal, it should come through the ordeal just fine. Perhaps we, the doting humans involved, should take two aspirin and then call the veterinarian in the morning.