

CANINE INFLUENZA H3N8 VACCINE AVAILABLE AT GRAYVIK ANIMAL CARE CENTER

The Canine Influenza Virus (CIV) is a newly appearing virus in dogs which causes acute respiratory infection. It has been identified in shelters, humane societies, boarding facilities, and veterinary clinics across the country. At this time it is very prevalent in Colorado, Florida, New York, and Pennsylvania.

CIV is a highly contagious virus that will infect virtually every dog that is exposed to it. About 80% of dogs infected will show clinical signs which include fever, malaise, and prolonged cough. Some patients will develop a severe form of the disease which often involves a secondary pneumonia and high fever. Nearly 20% of infected dogs will not display any clinical signs and become silent shedders.

Dogs are exposed to the virus in any place where dogs are in close contact with each other such as boarding kennels, groomers, canine daycare facilities, dog shows, and dog parks. The disease may also be spread by contact with contaminated items such as dog toys, blankets, clothes, and even bands. If your dog falls into one of these exposure categories, vaccination is highly recommended.

A safe and effective vaccine is now available from Intervet Schering-Plough Animal Health. Vaccinated dogs are far less likely to contract Canine Influenza H3N8 Virus and if they should become infected will have a shorter duration and less severe form of the illness. Vaccinating dogs may also help prevent an outbreak which would require closing down of any areas where dogs congregate. The CIV vaccine is a "lifestyle" vaccine, in that it is intended for dogs at risk of exposure to CIV. Dogs that may benefit from the CIV vaccine include those that are already receiving the "kennel cough" vaccine because the risk groups are the same.

The vaccine has been shown to have virtually no side effects. Dogs over 6 weeks of age are protected by getting two injections of vaccine two to four weeks apart followed by an annual booster. To date there is no evidence that the Canine Influenza (H3N8) Virus can be transmitted from dogs to humans.

Please contact the staff at the Grayvik Animal Care Center for more information or to schedule an appointment at 367-4701.