



# Swartz Veterinary Hospital

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Dr. Tammy Swartz

Dr. Laura Lawrenz



Dear Fellow Dog Owner,

This is an update for our dog owners regarding the latest information concerning Canine Influenza Virus, H3N8, also known as dog flu. This virus only affects dogs, not people or other animals.

The Canine Influenza Virus has been confirmed in 30 states including Kansas, Colorado, Wyoming, and Oklahoma. Colorado is now considered an “enzootic state”. This means the virus is always present in the animal community in Colorado. In fact the outbreaks in Fort Collins and Denver have caused shelters to completely shut down for weeks.

The number of cases in Kansas has been few. Due to our proximity to both Colorado and Wyoming, prevention before an outbreak would help limit, if not avoid, this problem in our canine companions here at home.

Canine Influenza Virus is extremely contagious. Dogs begin to shed the virus days before they show any signs of illness. Some dogs shed the virus and never show any signs. Dogs continue to shed the virus weeks after their illness is resolved. This virus is spread dog to dog by direct contact between dogs, air borne via cough or sneeze, or contaminated surfaces, such as human hands during petting, clothes, shoes, leashes, bowls, etc.

The first signs of Canine Influenza are the same as K-9 Bordetella or “Kennel Cough”, and Canine respiratory disease complex. Due to the similarity in signs to some of our other canine viral infections, it is so **important to keep your dog current on all of their routine vaccinations.** If your pet becomes ill and the vaccines have not been updated, this may further complicate the diagnosis and treatment of your pet.

As owners we can help protect our dogs by starting them on the Canine Influenza vaccine. This vaccine may prevent signs of infection, reduce the severity of the illness the dogs may experience, and help limit the spread of the virus in a majority of the cases. If your dog is vaccinated and still comes down with influenza, the vaccine will decrease the severity and duration of the disease, and help lower the viral load to decrease shedding and spread of the disease. The vaccine aids the dog’s immune system in preventing the progression of the virus to pneumonia, which is the most common reason dogs may die during their bout of Canine Influenza.

Other ways to help protect your pet in addition to keeping current on all preventative vaccines include: washing hands often, washing food and water bowls with a mild disinfectant, washing bedding, leashes and collars with mild color safe bleach, keeping your pet away from areas visited by other dogs that are overdue for vaccinations or unvaccinated.

Please call with any questions or concerns you may have regarding your dogs and how to protect them from Canine Influenza. [www.doginfluenza.com](http://www.doginfluenza.com)

Thank you,

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