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# Is your Dog at Risk for Canine Influenza?



The University of Florida has confirmed that the H3N2 dog flu strain is here in Southwest Florida. This particular influenza strain originated in South Korea several years ago but has since scattered through several states here in North America.

The vast spread of the virus is most likely due to owners traveling with their pets. For instance, it's thought to have increased through canines that compete in international dog shows, along with pet owners flying out of the country with their dogs. Just like the flu virus in humans, the canine version can spread rapidly. If a dog sneezes and the airborne particles reach another dog, either through the direct breathing in of the virus spores, or through indirect contamination of the bodily fluid on the hard surfaces, this increases the odds of cross contamination.

The canine flu is contaminating dogs that are typically more socialized. For example, dogs that are boarded, go to training or obedience school, attend doggie daycare, play at dog parks, attend dog shows (as mentioned above), or are walked by someone that takes multiple dogs at once from the neighborhood.

**The symptoms of H3N2 are the following:**

- Fever
- Sneezing
- Coughing
- A runny nose
- Lethargy
- Decreased appetite
- Body aches

These symptoms typically last 10-14 days and in most cases, the dog is able to heal on its own with little difficulty, but if you have an elderly dog or a puppy, or if your dog's immune system is low due to disease or other disorders than their complications could be life-threatening. Vaccination is available through your veterinarian. This simple injection could lessen the symptoms if your dog did, in fact, become infected with the virus.

If you suspect that your dog has the flu, please let your veterinarian's office know beforehand so that they can make arrangements for your dog to be escorted privately away from other pets. After your pet has been treated, the room will be decontaminated for the next pet to be seen safely.

Additionally, if your dog is sick with H3N2, immunotherapy injections or supplements may help to fight off the virus more quickly. But keep in mind, just like with humans, other than the preventative vaccination, there is no treatment for influenza.

**\_\_\_\_\_ Animal Hospital**

\_\_\_\_\_ Animal Hospital believes in providing quality health care for your pet in a warm and welcoming environment. Their doctors routinely attend educational seminars in order to stay abreast of the latest medical treatments and technologies. Their hospital also prides itself on having state-of-the-art equipment including a digital X-ray machine and surgical laser, both of which are used in human medicine. The digital X-ray machine allows them to take high-quality radiographs in seconds and gives their doctors images with better diagnostic quality, while the surgical laser helps to decrease pain and bleeding as well as increase healing speed of the incision.

\_\_\_\_\_ Animal Hospital offers free 24-hour access to your pet's medical record through a pet portal, as well as home delivery of your pet's prescriptions through an online store. Their online Pharmacy carries prescription medications, heartworm, flea and tick preventative, pet food, treats, and toys.

The doctors and staff are devoted to helping your pets' live longer, healthier and happier lives because they understand what an important member of your family

your pet. Their knowledgeable staff is available to answer any questions you may have, and they look forward to seeing you and your pet(s) soon. Please visit their website at \_\_\_\_\_ to find out more, or call them at \_\_\_\_\_ to book your appointment.