



Kennel Cough

Information for Dog Owners on Kennel Cough

Q. What is kennel cough and why is it important?

A. Kennel cough is an infectious condition affecting dogs causing a harsh cough. Most cases are not serious, but are a nuisance for a few days, often resolving without treatment. As with the common cold in people, a few unlucky patients may cough day and night or take much longer for the cough to subside.

Q. How is kennel cough spread?

A. Kennel cough is highly contagious and spreads easily through airborne/droplet infection anywhere that dogs are in close proximity to each other (across garden fences, in parks, boarding kennels, vet's waiting rooms and wards). If your dog gets kennel cough, any other dogs you have are likely to get infected too.

Q. What causes kennel cough and can you protect against it?

A. Kennel cough is caused by viruses and bacteria acting together. No vaccine can offer complete protection (the viruses and bacteria can be different from one case to another) but vaccines are available to protect against the most commonly involved virus (Canine parainfluenza virus) and the most commonly involved bacteria (*Bordetella bronchiseptica*). Many dogs may have some protection from kennel cough from parainfluenza virus from the routine vaccines that your vet will review annually. Vaccines against *Bordetella* are also available and are given as drops up the nose. Many boarding kennels require *Bordetella* vaccination.

Q. Should my dog be vaccinated before my appointment at Davies Veterinary Specialists?

A. We strive to reduce the chances of kennel cough coming onto these premises, but complete prevention is impossible. If your dog has not received a vaccine against Bordetella in the last 6 months and is well enough to receive one from your own vet before your appointment here, this will reduce the chances of your dog getting kennel cough should they encounter it here. If they are still unlucky enough to become infected, the infection is likely to be less severe if they have been vaccinated. If you are unsure about whether your dog should have a vaccine, please discuss this with your vet.

Q. I received this information too late to arrange vaccination before my dog's appointment. What can I do?

A. If your dog is not vaccinated against Bordetella but is likely to stay several days at Davies Veterinary Specialists recovering from an operation, we may offer vaccination if we feel your dog is healthy enough. Since the vaccine takes 3-5 days to work, we are unlikely to "target" unvaccinated patients staying for shorter periods.

Q. Are there risks or side effects of vaccination?

A. Some dogs have mild symptoms of coughing, sneezing or discharge from the eyes or nose for a few days following the vaccine. Occasionally they persist for longer. Other side effects are likely to be extremely rare.

Your dog should not receive Bordetella vaccination if it:

- is already receiving antibiotics (the vaccine is unlikely to do harm, but probably won't work)
- is already coughing or has a known respiratory condition
- has a known problem with the immune system, this is strongly suspected by your vet or it is receiving drugs to suppress the immune system
- has previously had serious adverse reactions to vaccines
- has received a vaccine made by a different drug company within the previous 2 weeks
- is being referred for diagnosis or management of a serious illness rather than for an elective operation (again the vaccine may not work)

IF IN DOUBT, PLEASE TALK TO YOUR VET