



## **What You Should Know About the Midwest Canine Influenza Outbreak**

*A training tool for you and your staff from NYSVMS*

### **The Virus**

-The canine influenza outbreak afflicting dogs in the Midwest is caused by a virus closely related to Asian strains of influenza A H3N2 viruses, currently in wide circulation in southern Chinese and South Korean dog populations. The H3N2 virus had not been previously detected in North America.

-The National Veterinary Services Laboratories is sequencing two isolates from this outbreak, which were isolated at Cornell University, to facilitate rapid complete characterization of the viruses.

**-There are no confirmed cases of canine flu as of April 23, 2015, related to this specific outbreak of H3N2, in New York State.**

-There is no evidence that H3N2 can be transmitted to humans. However, humans can spread it, so everyone should do thorough hand-washing after touching a dog.

### **Symptoms**

-Both influenza strains can cause: high fever, loss of appetite, coughing, nasal discharge, and lethargy. Symptoms may be more severe in cases caused by the H3N2 virus. Some infected dogs may not show symptoms at all.

-Dogs are most contagious during the two- to four-day incubation period for the virus, when they are infected and shedding the virus in their nasal secretions but are not showing signs of illness. Almost all dogs exposed to influenza will become infected, and 80% of infected dogs develop flu-like illness. The mortality rate is less than 10%.

-H3N2 has caused infection and respiratory illness in cats.

### **Diagnostic Testing**

-Veterinary professionals are advised that diagnostic testing of samples from sick pets can be done using a broadly targeted Influenza A matrix reverse transcriptase-polymerase chain reaction assay (Rt-PCR).

-The canine-specific Influenza A H3N8 Rt-PCR in use in several laboratories will not detect this virus.

-Serology testing is now available for H3N8 and H3N2. Submit acute and convalescent samples. Check <https://ahdc.vet.cornell.edu> for updates.

### **Vaccines**

-It is not known if the current vaccine will provide any protection from this new virus H3N2.

-The current vaccine does protect against H3N8, which is in circulation in some areas.

### **Prevention**

-In areas where the viruses are active, avoid places where dogs congregate, such as dog parks, grooming salons and boarding facilities. It is recommended that persons operating boarding or day care facilities for dogs require all dogs to be currently vaccinated no less the 4 weeks prior to entry into the facility.

-Owners of symptomatic dogs and cats should consult their veterinarians about testing and treatment.

### **More information:**

Cornell H3N2 FAQs: <https://ahdc.vet.cornell.edu/news/civchicago.cfm>

AVMA Canine Influenza: Pet Owners Guide:

<https://www.avma.org/public/PetCare/Pages/CanineInfluenza.aspx>; AVMA Canine Influenza Reference

Page: <https://www.avma.org/KB/Resources/FAQs/Pages/Control-of-Canine-Influenza-in-Dogs.aspx>

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