

Canine Respiratory Disease Uptick

Dear valued clients,

We want to keep you informed about a concerning health issue affecting pets in multiple states across the country. Veterinarians and news outlets are reporting cases of respiratory illness in dogs that are non-responsive to standard medical treatment and, at times, more serious than expected. Although the exact cause is currently unknown, we've compiled some frequently asked questions and answers to help address your concerns.

What are veterinarians observing?

Veterinarians are seeing three different possible symptoms in affected patients:

- Chronic mild to moderate cough lasting 6 to 8 weeks or longer that is minimally or non-responsive to antibiotics.
- Chronic pneumonia that is minimally or non-responsive to antibiotics.
- Acute pneumonia, that rapidly progresses, often leading to poor outcomes in as little as 24 to 36 hours.

What is causing this?

The underlying cause is currently unknown. Some experts suspect a viral origin due to the lack of response to commonly used antibiotics. Testing has provided variable results. Canine Respiratory Infectious Disease Complex (CRIDC) is a common problem linked to at least 9 different bacterial and viral organisms, often transmitted by respiratory droplets. Cases are more common in housed settings like shelters, boarding, or training facilities.

How do affected pets present?

Initial symptoms include coughing, sneezing, nose and/or eye discharge, fever, and lethargy. Pneumonia can also develop.

What should I do if I think my pet has this?

At the first signs of illness, call your veterinarian immediately. We will recommend three-view thoracic radiographs to evaluate for evidence of pneumonia and Respiratory PCR testing. If pneumonia is documented, re-evaluation will be recommended no longer than 10-14 days after initiating antibiotics.

Please be sure to call ahead if you think your pet is infected so we can create proper isolation within our hospital to protect all pets.

How is it treated?

Treatment varies based on the severity of clinical signs. Mild cases may require only symptomatic treatment and monitoring, while more severe cases may necessitate hospitalization with aggressive supportive care. Your veterinarian will assess your case and make a recommendation based on how severe your dog's symptoms are.

It is important to note that a cough may persist for several weeks after the infection, but as long as there is no ongoing evidence of pneumonia and your dog is not worsening, additional treatments may not be necessary.

How can we prevent it?

Ensure your pets are up to date on vaccinations, including Canine Influenza, Bordetella, Adenovirus Type 2 (the A2 in DA2P-PV), and Parainfluenza (the first P in DA2P-PV). Limit contact with other dogs, avoid communal water and food bowls, and consider limiting boarding, grooming, daycare, and training sessions. If your dog shows signs of illness, seek veterinary care promptly.

What about cats?

At this time, there is no evidence that this respiratory illness affects or can be spread to cats.

We understand the importance of your pets' health and want to assure you that veterinary professionals in our community are actively addressing this situation. If you have any concerns or notice signs of illness in your pets, please seek veterinary care promptly.

Thank you for your attention and commitment to your pets' well-being.

Sincerely,

Your Veterinary Team at Mebane Pet Clinic