

## Updated Kennel Cough Info for ALL Dances With Dogs Families

As you know, DWD requires the Bordatella (KC) vaccine for all pups attending our school. I have consulted with Brackett Street Vet Clinic and have been advised of the following:

There are TWO types of KC vaccine:

**injectable** (shot). Requires a booster (2nd shot) a number of weeks after the first shot. The vaccine is not fully effective until after the booster!

**internasal** (liquid in nostril). Effective a certain # of days after given, depending on the *brand* of vaccine being used. The best one being used currently at Brackett Street provides fullest coverage three days from vaccine date.

**Brackett Street Vet recommends that ALL our pups receive the vaccine internasally every 6 months while they are in school.**

Please check your records and/or call your vet's office to determine when your pup will need a second vaccine and get this scheduled ASAP. Request the vaccine with the soonest effective date post-vaccine.

ALL new students will receive the above info prior to start-date and will be required to wait until their vaccine is effective prior to joining our pack.

With all of this said, and even if everyone is in full compliance, your pup may still come down with KC. The KC vaccine is similar to the human flu vaccine - it covers against the main strains of the virus but not ALL strains. It is highly possible for a pup to spread KC before showing clear signs/symptoms of KC. A single sneeze, cough or runny nose can carry the virus to others by physical contact and via the air.

Once a pup shows signs of runny nose, cough, sneezing or a cold, they must NOT ATTEND school and must receive treatment by their vet. Most vets treat with antibiotics and recommend 10 days of quarantine from other pups.

Pups may continue to cough after treatment for up to 3-6 months but no longer are infectious to other pups after antibiotic treatment.

## Kennel Cough Requirements for ALL Dances With Dogs Families

NO pup will be allowed to attend DWD without the Bordatella (KC) vaccine - no exceptions. All pups must be boosted six months after their first vaccination, providing extra coverage against the illness.

Brackett Street Vet Clinic is the school's consulting veterinarian and has helped me craft the following requirements for the school. These will override your own vet's requirements, as I am erring on the side of caution to protect not only your own pup, but the rest of the school population.

The vaccination is NOT a GUARANTEE that your pup will not get KC. It provides coverage against major strains, not ALL strains, of KC. It is a highly infectious illness and spreads easily and rapidly!

If your dog is sneezing, coughing, gacking like something is caught in the throat or has other upper respiratory symptoms, please assume it IS kennel cough and seek immediate treatment from your vet. Explain that your pup has been around other pups. Press for treatment, please.

Dogs with symptoms at school will be sent home IMMEDIATELY.

Treatment with Cephalexin or Clavamox for TEN DAYS is recommended. Pups must remain OUT OF SCHOOL for 21 days, starting the first day of treatment and continuing for 11 days thereafter. Absolutely NO exceptions, regardless of what other vets are saying. It's the only way to reduce and/or eliminate this virus from spreading.

KC has reached serious levels in our area, with many pups affected. Be careful at local dog spots! It's in your pup's best interest to interact only with other dogs who have also been vaccinated and are NOT showing any signs, EVEN IF you're being told they don't have kennel cough, it's only a virus, a cold, etc. Assume on the side of caution.

**Q: What is canine cough (kennel cough)?**

**A:** Canine cough or more commonly known as “kennel cough”, is a highly contagious infection of the upper respiratory tract (trachea or windpipe) and the main lower airways (bronchia). Canine cough is primarily caused by a bacteria called *Bordetella bronchiseptica* and can involve various viral infections such as by parainfluenza and adenovirus.

**Q: How can my dog get canine cough?**

**A:** The organisms that cause canine cough are highly infectious. Disease is spread via contact or by being in close proximity to infected dogs. These infectious organisms are airborne pathogens, which are easily spread when infected dogs sneeze, cough or even drool. Because of the highly infectious nature of *Bordetella bronchiseptica*, disease is often contracted when dogs are congregated at places such as kennels, shows, obedience classes, grooming centers, parks or even while visiting places or homes where other dogs or cats reside. It's important to note that some dogs are 'carriers' and often carry and spread the infection for months while not showing any signs of disease themselves. These 'carriers' act as a source of infection to other dogs.

**Q: What are the symptoms?**

**A:** The classical sign is a harsh, hacking cough that often finishes with gagging and may or may not be accompanied by mucus. The disease can appear to have a sudden onset, though coughing usually occurs within 4-8 days following exposure. The coughing bouts can persist for a number of weeks despite treatment, creating discomfort for the dog and it's owner.

More severely affected dogs may have depressed appetites, fever, and complications that could lead to pneumonia.

**Q: What about treatment?**

**A:** Treatment involves rest, isolation to avoid infecting other dogs that may be at home or other kennelled dogs, as well as antibiotics and cough suppressants as prescribed by your veterinarian.

**Q: How can I prevent my dog from catching canine cough?**

**A:** Your first line of defense is to have your dog properly vaccinated by your veterinarian or their trained technician. As a pet owner, you have the responsibility to discuss with your veterinarian details about your plans to board, train, groom, show, and other social activities that would cause your dog to be congregated with other dogs. What other dogs are in your home? Will you be purchasing a puppy during the year? Are there cats in the home? Remember that other dogs can carry and spread infection for months.

**Q: Are vaccines effective?**

**A:** Yes. To maximize your dog's protection you should avoid vaccinating at the last minute. Vaccines need time to build up your dog's immunity. By planning your dog's boarding or other social events, you can maximize protection and avoid that 'last minute' emergency vaccination. Several vaccines are available to help protect your dog against canine cough. In most cases, your veterinarian will choose to vaccinate against the leading disease agent, *Bordetella bronchiseptica*.

The other infectious agents of canine cough such as parainfluenza and adenovirus are vaccinated against using a combination vaccine administered subcutaneously to your dog as part of their routine vaccination program. The vaccines selected by your veterinarian have been proven effective and are approved and monitored by the USDA.

**Q: What about reactions?**

**A:** As with any vaccine or drug introduced into an animal's system, it's important to monitor your pet for at least 24 hours following administration.

**Q: What if I board my dog often?**

**A:** If you board or congregate your dog often, then you should have your dog on a regular vaccination program. You can't count on all other dog owners to have had their dogs properly vaccinated. In endemic situations or places where canine cough has been known to occur such as dog show, boarding kennels, etc., your veterinarian may recommend a revaccination to heighten your dog's immune system.

**Q: What if I never board my dog?**

**A:** If you are certain that your dog will never leave your home or meet another dog while going for a walk, you may have reduced it's risk to exposure. However, life can be unpredictable and you can't count on every other dog owner to have a healthy pet that has been properly vaccinated. You should include *Bordetella bronchiseptica* as part of your pet's routine vaccination program.

**Q: What about bringing a new puppy home and I already have other dogs?**

**A:** Discuss with your veterinarian what you know about the puppy's health, it's vaccination history, and facility where obtained. With that information, your veterinarian can review your current pet's health records and determine if primary vaccination or boosting is warranted.