

# Understanding Canine Cough (aka Kennel Cough): What Every Dog Owner Should Know

As dog owners, our furry companions' health is always at the forefront of our minds. Whether it's scheduling regular vet checkups, ensuring they get plenty of exercise, or choosing a well-balanced diet, we all want to keep our dogs in the best shape possible. One common concern in dog boarding and environments where dogs socialize is **canine cough (aka kennel cough)**. But what exactly is canine cough, and how can you protect your dog while boarding them at a luxury pet boarding facility like Pocono and Bushkill Bed & Biscuits?

Let's dive into everything you need to know about canine cough, its causes, and why it's a normal occurrence especially in places where dogs gather.

## What is Canine Cough?

Canine cough, scientifically known as **canine infectious tracheobronchitis** and commonly known as kennel cough, is essentially the dog equivalent of a cold. It's a **highly contagious respiratory illness** that primarily spreads through airborne particles, meaning it can pass from dog to dog with ease. When an infected dog coughs, sneezes, or even breathes, the bacteria or virus responsible for canine cough can travel through the air, making it very easy for nearby dogs to contract the illness.

While many owners worry about their dogs catching kennel cough when they bring them to a boarding facility, it's important to remember that **anywhere there are multiple dogs interacting, there's always a potential for the illness to spread**—whether it's at the park, doggie daycare, or even your neighborhood dog meet-up.

## How Does Canine Cough Spread?

Canine cough spreads similarly to how colds pass from person to person in human populations—through **airborne droplets**, contaminated surfaces, and direct contact between dogs. Dogs are especially vulnerable in spaces where they come into close proximity with other dogs, such as dog parks, dog shows, and of course, **boarding facilities**. The infection is typically caused by a combination of viruses and bacteria

including **Bordetella bronchiseptica**, canine parainfluenza virus, and canine adenovirus.

Once a dog is exposed to the airborne particles, the illness can take anywhere from two to 14 days to incubate. Symptoms include:

- A **persistent, hacking cough** (often described as sounding like something stuck in the throat or a goose honk)
- Sneezing
- Runny nose or nasal discharge
- Fatigue and lethargy
- Loss of appetite
- Eye discharge
- Mild fever in some cases

While most cases of canine cough are mild, some dogs may develop more severe symptoms, such as difficulty breathing or pneumonia.

### **Why No Amount of Cleaning Can Fully Prevent Canine Cough**

Here at **Bed & Biscuits**, we pride ourselves on maintaining one of the cleanest and most sanitary boarding facilities. We follow **the most stringent cleaning and disinfection protocols** to keep our environment as germ-free as possible. Every surface a dog interacts with is disinfected daily with pet-safe products that are proven to kill bacteria and viruses on contact.

However, despite these top-notch cleaning standards, no amount of disinfection can fully prevent the spread of canine cough. **The illness is airborne**, which means it can still spread through the air even in the cleanest environments. Just like how humans can catch a cold despite washing their hands and avoiding germs, dogs can contract canine cough when the bacteria or virus is floating in the air.

At **Bed & Biscuits**, we understand that kennel cough can be a concern for dog owners, but we also believe it's important to set realistic expectations. While we take every precaution possible, the **risk of canine cough is unavoidable** in any place where dogs gather.

### **How We Minimize Kennel Cough Risk at Bed & Biscuits**

- **Stringent cleaning protocols:** Our staff is trained in the most effective cleaning methods, using medical-grade, pet-safe disinfectants to keep every area spotless.

- **Ventilation systems:** We ensure that air in our indoor spaces is continuously refreshed and circulated to reduce the concentration of airborne pathogens through our commercial/kennel grade hepa filters.
- **Monitoring of guest health:** Dogs showing any symptoms of illness are kept in their room to prevent them from spreading potential infections to other dogs.
- **Veterinary care for symptomatic dogs:** If any dog shows signs of canine cough or other illness, we notify the owner and will bring them to the vet for an evaluation. If vet feels symptom needs to be treated with antibiotics, owner will be notified and medication will be dispensed.

Although we do everything within our power to maintain a clean and healthy environment, **anywhere there are dogs, there's always the possibility of illness.** This is something we want to be upfront about with all our guests.

### **Canine Cough: A Natural Part of Dog Life (Just Like the Common Cold in School Kids)**

When it comes to canine cough, we like to remind our pet parents that **the situation is very similar to children going to school.** Imagine sending your child to school and another student in their class coughs on them and they catch a cold. Despite the school's efforts to sanitize classrooms and encourage hygiene, colds are still inevitable. As you wouldn't expect the school to pay the doctor's bill for your child, the same applies to Bed & Biscuits.

At **Bed & Biscuits**, we believe in full transparency. While we work hard to reduce the risk of kennel cough, **we don't cover vet bills** for cases of kennel cough. This is because it's a natural occurrence in environments where dogs socialize—just like kids catching colds at school. It's part of being in a community of dogs, and it happens in even the best of environments.

### **Why Boarding at Bed & Biscuits is Still the Best Option**

Choosing to board your dog at a reputable facility like Bed & Biscuits comes with many benefits, despite the potential for minor illnesses like canine cough. Some of these benefits include:

- **Supervised socialization:** Dogs are naturally social animals, and giving them a safe environment to interact with others is crucial for their well-being.
- **Exercise and enrichment:** At Bed & Biscuits, dogs have access to spacious play areas, daily outdoor walks, and lots of interactive play to keep them physically and mentally engaged.

- **Regular health monitoring:** Our trained staff always monitor in detecting early signs of illness, which means that if a dog starts showing symptoms of kennel cough, we can take quick action to separate them from the group, bring them to the vet, and notify their owner immediately.
- **Comfort and care:** From cozy kennels to personalized care, we ensure that every dog feels comfortable and safe while they're staying with us.

## How to Reduce the Risk of Canine Cough

Although canine cough can't be completely avoided, there are a few things you can do to reduce your dog's risk in general:

- **Vaccinate your dog:** The **Bordetella vaccine** can help protect your dog from the most common cause of canine cough. While it's not 100% effective, it significantly reduces the risk.
- **Boost your dog's immune system:** Keeping your dog healthy through proper nutrition, regular exercise, and a low-stress environment can help them fight off infections. Additionally, you can try adding supplements to your dog's diet to make sure they get that extra vitamin boost they need to stay healthy.
- **Avoid contact:** If possible, avoid exposing your dog to other dogs that may be sick.
- **Proper hygiene:** Practice good hygiene by washing your hands and cleaning your dog's belongings regularly.
- **Stay informed:** Choose a dog boarding facility that follows strict cleaning and hygiene protocols and is open about how they manage kennel cough cases.

## Treatment for Canine Cough

Even if you've done your best to keep your dog safe and your dog still catches canine cough, there's no need to worry. In most cases, canine cough is a mild illness that resolves on its own within a couple of weeks. However, there are several things you can do to help your dog recover more comfortably:

- **Provide a calm environment:** Reduce your dog's physical activity and ensure they have a quiet, stress-free space to rest. Too much excitement or exercise can worsen the cough.
- **Keep hydrated:** Ensure your dog has plenty of fresh water. Staying hydrated can help soothe their throat and make them more comfortable.
- **Humidify the air:** Using a humidifier in the room where your dog sleeps can help ease any irritation in their respiratory system.

- **Avoid irritants:** Steer your dog clear of cigarette smoke, household chemicals, or strong perfumes, as these can irritate their airways and worsen the cough.
- **Use a harness instead of a collar:** If your dog typically wears a collar, switching to a harness can prevent unnecessary pressure on their throat while walking.

Most dogs recover fully with a little extra care, but if your dog's symptoms seem severe or persist beyond two weeks, or if they have an underlying health condition, a visit to the veterinarian may be necessary. In such cases, your vet might prescribe antibiotics or cough suppressants to ease symptoms and help prevent secondary infections or complications.

### **A Healthy Stay at Bed & Biscuits**

Canine cough is a normal part of life for social dogs, but at **Bed & Biscuits**, we work hard to minimize the risk while still providing a fun, enriching, and safe environment for all our guests. Whether your dog is just with us for a weekend or in for a longer staycation, you can trust that we'll keep their well-being as our top priority.

If you have any concerns about canine cough or would like more information about our policies, feel free to reach out to us. We're happy to answer any questions and provide the best possible care for your four-legged friend!