



CIRD

Respiratory disease in dogs can be a serious condition, and Canine Infectious Respiratory Disease (CIRD) is one of the most prevalent upper respiratory conditions in dogs. CIRD, also referred to as Kennel Cough, is highly contagious and can cause numerous respiratory problems in your pet. To learn more about CIRD in dogs, read on.

What Are the Infectious Agents Involved with CIRD?

There are several different agents that can be the cause of CIRD. [Bordetella bronchiseptica](#) and mycoplasma are the most common viruses involved. Other causes are thought to be the reovirus, canine adenovirus type 2, and canine herpes. While all of these organisms can contribute to the disease, most cases of CIRD are the result of numerous organisms acting together.

Symptoms of CIRD in Dogs

CIRD can produce the following signs and symptoms in your pet:

- Dry coughing
- Hacking
- Retching
- Honking sound when coughing
- Watery discharge from eyes or nose
- Lethargy
- Fever
- Decrease in appetite
- Sudden lack of energy

Precautions - Understand that these illnesses and their clinical signs (coughing, nasal discharge, etc) can come on suddenly after a 2-10 day incubation period and take from 1-3 weeks to resolve. As long as the patient is eating, active and otherwise gaining weight, we will continue to monitor for signs of a secondary pneumonia and let them get over these childhood illnesses, much like a two year old in a new daycare situation.

The most common of these symptoms is a [dry cough](#). In less severe cases, your dog may still be alert and energetic, with a healthy appetite. In more serious cases of CIRD, your dog will likely have a fever and show signs of severe lethargy. Decrease in appetite is usually present in more severe cases, as well. If left untreated, canine infectious respiratory disease can lead to death. Dogs with a compromised immune system and unvaccinated puppies have an increased risk for death or serious complications.

Diagnosing CIRD in Dogs



A veterinarian will diagnose your pet based on his symptoms and history of exposure to other dogs. Tests such as blood work, bacterial testing, and viral isolation may also be performed, but are often not necessary in a diagnosis.

Treating CIRP in Dogs

Depending on how severe the disease is, there are two possible treatments available for your pet. Most commonly, antibiotics are used, as well as cough suppressants and bronchodilators.

In more severe cases of CIRP, antibiotics such as trimethoprim-sulfa and doxycycline are used. Cough suppressants are not recommended in severe cases as there is an increased risk for immunosuppression when they are used. It is recommended that dogs suffering from CIRP wear a harness instead of a traditional neck collar to prevent choking and coughing.

Preventing CIRP in Dogs

The most effective way to prevent canine infectious respiratory disease is to avoid exposing your pet to other dogs, in particular, puppies. If this is not a possibility, vaccines are available. The injectable Bordetella vaccine and the Bordetella vaccine that is squirted into the nostrils are the most common vaccinations.

Strict hygiene should be practiced in kennels and other possible infected areas. Be sure to clean any kennel or area with a disinfectant before use. In addition, food and water bowls should be cleaned frequently to avoid viruses.

CIRP can also be prevented with [frequent checkups](#) with your veterinarian. Also keep in mind that CIRP viruses may be inside of your pet laying dormant. Even if the viruses are present, they may not exhibit any signs or symptoms for some time. Another important thing to remember is that the disease is best treated in the earliest stages. The sooner you catch the condition, the better the chances for a speedy and successful recovery.