



Reports of Increased Canine Respiratory Illnesses in United States

Date: November 28, 2023

Public Health Message Type: ☐ Alert ☐ Advisory ☒ Update ☐ Information

Intended Audience: ☐ All public health partners ☐ Healthcare providers ☐ Infection preventionists
☒ Local health departments ☐ Schools/child care centers ☒ ACOs
☒ Animal health professionals ☐ Other:

Key Points:

- (1) Veterinarians from multiple states have reported increased numbers of canine respiratory cases. New Jersey Department of Health has received several inquiries from veterinarians about the reported respiratory illnesses and reports of potential canine respiratory cases that may match the described cases in other states.
- (2) At this time, a definitive cause for the illnesses has not yet been identified, and it is unknown whether reported cases from different locations are all caused by the same pathogen. Additional diagnostics and testing are ongoing. There are no reports of human illness affiliated with these cases at this time.
- (3) There are many pathogens that can cause respiratory illnesses in dogs, some of which have effective vaccines to prevent disease spread.
- (4) Symptoms of respiratory illness in dogs may include coughing, difficulty breathing, sneezing, nasal or eye discharge, and lethargy. Veterinarians in other states are reporting cases of respiratory illness in dogs that present with prolonged coughing with minimal response to treatment, and some cases that have progressed to pneumonia. Rare severe cases that have resulted in death have also been reported.

Action Items:

- (1) Veterinarians:
 - a. Report suspected or confirmed outbreaks in domestic companion animals to your local health department. Local health department contact information can be found here: <https://www.nj.gov/health/lh/community/>
 - i. It is recommended that veterinarians ask owners about past exposure history of their dogs, such as recent boarding, travel, etc. to potentially identify sources of exposure.
 - ii. Information and guidance on reporting requirements of zoonotic diseases and outbreaks in domestic companion animals in New Jersey can be found here: <https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/reporting/when/dcard.shtml>
 - b. Sporadic/singular cases of canine respiratory illnesses are not required to be reported to the local health department if no outbreak is suspected. Veterinarians should use clinical judgement for diagnostics and treatment.

- c. Consider acute diagnostics and contact the veterinary diagnostic laboratory used to ensure that you are following proper specimen collection and storage techniques.
 - d. Veterinary hospitals should ensure they have biosecurity protocols and measures in place to prevent the spread of communicable diseases in the veterinary facility. This would include isolation protocols, cleaning and disinfection, and use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
 - e. Veterinarians may contact NJDOH, Office of Veterinary Public Health at 609-826-4872 with questions or to provide other information related to the increased canine respiratory illnesses.
- (2) Licensed animal facilities:
- a. Work with your supervising veterinarian to ensure there are appropriate disease control and prevention protocols in place and being followed at the facility, including, but not limited to isolation, cleaning/disinfection protocols and use of PPE.
 - b. Report outbreaks to your supervising veterinarian and to the local health department. Work with your supervising veterinarian on outbreak response to limit disease spread.
- (3) Local health departments:
- a. Residents calling about sick pets should contact a veterinarian for evaluation of their pet.
 - b. Local health departments should notify NJDOH of any reported outbreak in domestic companion animals by emailing zoonoticrn@doh.nj.gov or calling 609-826-4872. If veterinarians call about singular cases of respiratory illness in dogs that are not tied to a suspect/confirmed outbreak, these are not required to be reported to NJDOH. Veterinarians seeking diagnostic testing for patients should consult with the veterinary diagnostic laboratories they use to ensure proper specimen collection and storage. Veterinarians can also contact NJDOH with additional questions or unusual cases.

Contact Information:

- Darby McDermott, NJ State Public Health Veterinarian, Darby.McDermott@doh.nj.gov
- The Office of Veterinary Public Health, Communicable Disease Service; zoonoticrn@doh.nj.gov or 609-826-4872

References and Resources:

- <https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/reporting/when/dcard.shtml>
- <https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/documents/zoonotic-disease-investigation.pdf>
- <https://www.nj.gov/agriculture/ahdl/>
- <https://www.avma.org/news/oregon-dealing-respiratory-illness-incidents-dogs>
- <https://ag.colorado.gov/canine-respiratory-disease>
- <https://www.vet.cornell.edu/departments/riney-canine-health-center/canine-health-information/canine-respiratory-disease-outbreaks>
- <https://colsa.unh.edu/new-hampshire-veterinary-diagnostic-laboratory/canine-respiratory-outbreak>