



New Respiratory Disease in Dogs

There have been several news articles on a new respiratory disease in dogs. The New Hampshire Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory has been investigating these cases since fall of 2022 with an increasing number of cases in 2023. The affected dogs will present with symptoms that initially look like Kennel Cough: nasal discharge, sneezing, fever, runny eyes, cough, decreased appetite and lack of interest in playing. Kennel Cough will usually run its course in 3 weeks with gradual improvement and complete recovery in that time. However, with dogs suffering from the new disease the symptoms persist longer, with some dogs progressing on to pneumonia. Dogs with this disease haven't shown much improvement when treated with standard drugs for Kennel Cough. The mortality rate appears to be low, but as the investigation is still ongoing the actual mortality rate is unknown.

The diagnostic lab has been analyzing samples from these cases to try to determine a cause. One hallmark of these cases is that they test negative for all known canine respiratory pathogens including viral, bacterial and fungal diseases. Covid 19 has also been tested for and not found. The lab did identify a "bacterial-like organism, similar to Mycoplasma." Currently this organism is the prime suspect. Mycoplasmas are a unique form of very small bacteria that have some properties more like viruses than bacteria. Mycoplasma pneumonias have been known in many species for many years. Results at this point are preliminary. As more research comes in perhaps there will be more answers.

Currently this disease has only been seen in dogs. There is no evidence at this point, that either humans or other animal species are at risk.

In the meantime, I would encourage you to take measures to try to prevent exposure of your pet dog to other dogs. So, avoid boarding kennels and dog parks or anywhere your dog is exposed to dogs from other households, if you can. Try not to leave your dog at the groomers any longer than necessary. When going to the vet, try to pick less busy times like the first appointment of the day. If the clinic lets you wait in the car with your dog till appointment time, that could also help decrease exposure. You can ask your vet's office if there has been much incidence of this disease in your area. If your dog does come down with symptoms, then seek veterinary care.

Source:

Canine Respiratory Outbreak | New Hampshire Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (unh.edu)