



Little River  
Veterinary Clinic

October 15, 2009

## **CANINE INFLUENZA ALERT AND UPDATE.**

The canine influenza or canine flu vaccine is here. Canine flu was recently diagnosed in cases at the Fairfax County Animal Shelter and Deepwood Veterinary Clinic in Centreville in August and led to closure of the shelter.

The flu was first seen in 2004 in Florida and has been spreading since then in various areas of the country (New York, Washington DC, Colorado, Philadelphia, and Pittsburgh to name a few). Here are a few facts about this highly contagious virus that will help you decide if your pet is at risk and should be vaccinated.

### **PROTECT YOUR DOG AGAINST CANINE INFLUENZA TODAY**

**Cause:** a **HIGHLY INFECTIOUS** H3N8 influenza virus; Almost 100 % of dogs exposed will be infected and of those 50-80 % of dogs will show clinical signs.

**Signs:** cough, sneeze, nasal discharge, eye discharge, fever, loss of appetite, pneumonia, difficulty breathing. Fatal in 5-8% of cases usually from secondary infections associated with pneumonia.

**Spread:** licking or sniffing contact with infected dogs or objects, dogs or people that were in contact with infected dogs (including shoes and clothes). Dogs exposed can shed virus without any signs of being ill.

**Dogs at Risk:** the very young, the very old, sick puppies or dogs, dogs with chronic medical conditions or those with impaired immune systems.

**Increased Risk:** dogs in daycare, dogs in grooming facilities or groomed by traveling groomers, dogs in boarding facilities, shelters, pet stores, dog shows, dog parks and veterinary facilities.

**Dogs that should be vaccinated:** Dogs at Risk and with increased risk (see above). It is recommended that **all dogs to be boarded over the Thanksgiving and Christmas/Hanukah/New Year holidays should be vaccinated NOW to have protective levels of antibodies. We anticipate that this will help remove this disease from our population of pets along with good management practice and keep our pets safe.**

**Things to prevent spreading** this disease in our community:

#1 VACCINATE

Avoid bringing new pets into foster care environments, shelters, or your multidog household without vaccinating current dogs and without implementing a quarantine of 2 weeks.

**Vaccine:**

**Vaccinated dogs that become infected are less ill, are ill for a shorter period of time and are less contagious to other pets. The severity of lung damage is reduced in vaccinated pets.** The vaccine may not prevent infections but SIGNIFICANTLY reduces the severity of the disease. The vaccine also reduces the amount and length of time of viral shedding so vaccinated pets are less contagious. **VERY SAFE – no side effects or vaccine reactions have been reported to date!!!**

**Vaccine Protocol:** Initial vaccine pups > 6 weeks0 . Booster in 2-4 weeks. Some protection with just the initial vaccine. **Most protective 2 weeks after second booster** . Please don't hesitate to ask one of our staff veterinarians if you have ANY questions.