

Infectious Canine Bronchitis (ICB)

What is ICB?

ICB is a contagious illness affecting dogs, the main symptom of which is coughing. It is also known as Canine Cough, or Kennel Cough.

What causes ICB?

*Various different bacteria and viruses cause it; one of the most common is *Bordatella bronchiseptica*.*

What are the symptoms?

Most dogs develop a cough or retch which sounds as if they have something stuck in their throat. Some dogs will also develop a temperature and appear to be unwell. Less commonly, there may be other symptoms such as diarrhoea. The illness is a nuisance but is very rarely life-threatening. In older dogs, or those with existing heart or lung problems, there can be complications. The usual course of the disease is 1-2 weeks.

Where & how do dogs catch ICB?

The infection is spread in the air, just like human coughs and colds. Infected dogs will pass it on to others while they are still incubating the disease, often seven days or more before they actually start coughing. Spread occurs most easily where dogs are gathered together in any numbers, for example at dog shows, boarding kennels, training classes, veterinary surgeries, grooming parlours and anywhere where a lot of dogs are exercised (the beach, the common, the park etc).

The infection is not caused by poor hygiene, and dogs do not need to come into direct contact with each other to catch it.

What treatment is needed?

In some cases the infection is very mild and no treatment will be necessary. More usually, affected dogs will require some veterinary treatment which might include antibiotics, anti-inflammatories, cough mixtures etc

What happens if my dog develops ICB whilst boarding or after boarding?

During an outbreak of ICB it is likely that sooner or later an infected dog without symptoms will enter the kennels and spread it to other dogs. If a dog develops symptoms while boarding, the kennels vet will give treatment. If a dog develops symptoms after going home, which is more common, the owner

should see their own vet and send us a receipt so that we may make a claim under our veterinary insurance policy. The usual period of insurance lasts until 72 hours after leaving the kennels, but because of the long incubation period of this cough, our insurers will usually extend that deadline for ICB cases.

Can ICB be prevented by kennels?

There is little that can be done to prevent an air-borne illness with a long incubation period. Affected dogs are contagious to others, unknown to us or their owners, for days before they start coughing. Isolating affected dogs is therefore of limited value.

Can ICB be prevented by owners?

There is a vaccination that can be given, by nasal drops, against the main strains of the cough. It will not prevent all cases, but it is likely to significantly reduce the number of cases in any outbreak, and may make it less severe in individual cases.

*In order to reduce the number of cases to a minimum, **we request that all dogs boarded have had the ICB vaccination** (in addition to the other required vaccinations) within the period recommended by the manufacturer or your vet. (This can be 12 months or 6 months, depending on the type of vaccine used.)The only exceptions would be where the dog has a difficult temperament or a medical problem making vaccination inadvisable, or where boarding is at short notice due to a genuine emergency.*

Please help us to keep the nuisance caused by ICB to an absolute minimum by keeping your dog vaccinated. This way we can afford to continue to offer full veterinary insurance to all of our boarders.

If you would like any further information, please contact us or your own veterinary surgery.

LITTLE COOMBE KENNELS (01395) 232545
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