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## Kennel Cough

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With the holiday season rapidly approaching, thoughts of traveling to visit family and friends come too. For our pets, this might mean a trip to a boarding facility. Most boarding facilities have some kind of closed environment where the pets are housed to keep them clean and dry, often with an outdoor play area for exercise and sunshine. Like a kindergarten classroom in wintertime, this closed environment can be a Petri dish for diseases like “kennel cough”.

Kennel cough is a lay term for a condition called infectious tracheobronchitis. This translates to an infection of the trachea and bronchus, or upper airway. The infection usually involves a bacteria called *Bordetella bronchoseptica*, as well as other players, together in a respiratory disease complex. This matters to you, the dog owner because disease complexes are always more complicated. Suffice it to say, there are many different potential bugs that can cause kennel cough, which makes it more difficult to prevent.

Your standard distemper/parvo vaccine protects against some of the viruses involved in “kennel cough”, and there is a “kennel cough” vaccine that includes *Bordetella* and sometimes Parainfluenza. But the protection this vaccine generates only seems to last about 6 to 12 months. So what is a person to do?

Here are my tips for you. If you are boarding your pet, make sure it has had a distemper/parvo/adenovirus vaccine within the last 12 months, and vaccinate your dog for *Bordetella* and Parainfluenza at least 2 weeks but not more than 6 months prior to boarding. If your dog is already sick or has a history of respiratory problems, do not board it. Choose a boarding facility with good ventilation and one that requires proof of a “kennel cough” vaccine.

Even with these measures, it is possible for your dog to contract “kennel cough”. Many mild cases of “kennel cough” are self-limiting and resolve on their own. But some cases become severe, resulting in a long term, chronic cough, or even develop into pneumonia. Once infected, your dog can shed the bacteria, even after its condition has resolved, for up to 3 months exposing your other pets and even you.