



Mazomanie Animal Hospital, LLC

Important: Canine Influenza Update

Canine Influenza is a potentially serious respiratory virus seen in dogs in some parts of the United States. Until recently, Wisconsin dog owners had little reason to worry about this virus unless traveling to other states. Recently, however, a new and more virulent strain, H3N2, has emerged in the Chicago area. The virus has begun to spread, and in the month of December 2015, seven cases of the H3N2 flu strain have been reported in Dane County. The first four of those dogs were in the same household and were exposed to a sick dog in Chicago.

While there is no need panic about this new illness, it seems prudent at this time to begin offering the vaccine to dogs who may be at higher risk. If the H3N2 strain continues to spread throughout Dane County and the rest of Wisconsin, you will be receiving further communications from us.

The take home point is that the H3N2 and H3N8 flu viruses are still very rare in this area but may be increasing. You must think about your own dogs' potential exposure, and decide whether or not you are comfortable with this (so far) small risk. We do have the vaccine available at Mazomanie Animal Hospital, for both strains, if you wish to vaccinate your dog.

More Information on Canine Influenza from the University of Wisconsin School of Veterinary Medicine website:

“In spring 2015, the Chicago area dog population was hit with a new, more potent strain of canine influenza virus (CIV) named H3N2. It caused more than 2,000 cases of respiratory illness in dogs and several deaths.

Like its relative, H3N8, which has been affecting dogs with a milder form of respiratory illness since 2005, H3N2 CIV is spread through dog-to-dog contact, indirectly through infected items such as shared dog toys, and through the air via coughs and sneezes. Since the Chicago outbreak, more than 20 states, including Wisconsin, have reported cases of H3N2 CIV in their dog population.

Dogs in boarding facilities, dog daycare, animal shelters, canine sporting events, those who visit dog parks and grooming facilities, and veterinary medical care facilities are at a higher risk of contracting either of these diseases.

A vaccine for the prevention of H3N8 CIV has been on the market for several years but was rarely used in the Midwest due to the low incidence of the disease in this area. Regardless, dogs that were vaccinated with the H3N8 vaccine were not protected from contracting the disease caused by the new H3N2 strain.

However, this week two major veterinary pharmaceutical companies announced the availability of a vaccine with a conditional license for the prevention of H3N2 CIV. Dogs six weeks and older may receive the vaccine. Two to three weeks following the initial vaccine, dogs must receive a booster, which will provide full immunity after two additional weeks. Annual vaccines are recommended after that.”