

# Kennel Cough FAQs



## What is Kennel Cough?

Kennel Cough, or Canine Infectious Respiratory Disease Complex (CIRDC), is a highly contagious disease in dogs, caused by a number of upper respiratory viruses (including canine parainfluenza virus) and bacteria (usually *Bordetella bronchiseptica*). Diagnostic testing performed via your veterinarian, can accurately confirm the infectious agent to tailor appropriate treatment and prevention.

Below is a table of the infectious agents involved and symptoms of Canine Kennel Cough complex:

Disease	Causative Organism	Symptoms	Transmission	Treatments
<b>Canine Infectious Respiratory Disease Complex (Kennel Cough)</b>	Canine parainfluenza virus, Canine influenza virus, Canine herpes virus, <i>Mycoplasma spp.</i> , <i>Bordetella bronchiseptica</i> , other bacterial species	Fever, dry cough, nasal discharge, lethargy, anorexia and pneumonia.	Spread as droplets in the air (Aerosol).	Vaccination (has limited efficacy and not available for all causative organisms but reduces clinical signs and severity in those it does cover); specific anti-biotics; disinfectants for surfaces and equipment. Good Biosecurity practices should be followed.

**Table 1:** Infections agents, transmission, symptoms of Kennel Cough

## How do dogs get Kennel Cough?

Kennel Cough is spread as droplets in the air (aerosols) from a coughing dog to a healthy dog that come into close proximity. Once a greyhound has inhaled the infection, it usually takes between five and seven days for symptoms to appear.

## What are the symptoms of Kennel Cough?

The symptoms of Kennel Cough include:

- runny nose
- sneezing,
- dry, hacking cough with or without fever
- loss of appetite
- runny eyes
- lack of energy.

## How long does Kennel Cough last?

This depends on the age and health status of your greyhound; its vaccination status and the exact infectious agent. Vaccination to prevent the disease is important to maintain immunity because dogs with Kennel Cough can continue to spread the infection for up to three months after their symptoms have disappeared. Also, preventable respiratory viruses can create a favourable environment for secondary infections which may make greyhounds very unwell. Kennel Cough vaccinations can be obtained through your veterinarian in injectable, intranasal (up the nose) or oral forms. Rapid immune protection from viruses is best achieved using the intranasal or oral forms, which are live virus vaccines.

## Are there any other ways to protect my dog from Kennel Cough?

Maintaining good biosecurity is key to preventing Kennel Cough from entering your kennels. New greyhounds on the property should be quarantined on arrival for 7-14 days to ensure they are not showing any signs of Kennel Cough or incubating the disease at time of arrival.

For further information, refer to GWIC's [Biosecurity FAQ's](#).

## My greyhound has Kennel Cough, what do I do?

Kennel Cough can spread rapidly through kennels so early recognition and action can help prevent other greyhounds from becoming infected. The sick greyhound should be immediately isolated from all other dogs on your property. Greyhounds in contact with affected greyhounds should be quarantined and monitored closely for symptoms.

Your veterinarian can provide you with information about treatment, isolation/quarantine and vaccination options for the affected greyhound(s) and any other dogs on your property. Greyhounds which become unwell in themselves, are lethargic, anorexic (loss of appetite) or have severe and/or persistent coughing (>24 hours) should be seen by your veterinarian. Diagnostic testing performed via your veterinarian can accurately confirm the infectious agent to tailor appropriate treatment and prevention, which can reduce unnecessary or ineffective treatments.

## My greyhound has Kennel Cough, can I treat it at home?

No. Always seek veterinary advice prior to administering any medication, including cough medicines. Every year several greyhounds test positive to cough suppressants (antitussives) or expectorants generally purchased over the counter at a pharmacy. A cough suppressant may delay recovery in the case of a productive cough. In some cases, the prohibited substance given will remain in the system for several weeks, e.g. pholcodine has an extremely long half-life and is eliminated very slowly.

**If you have any questions about Kennel Cough or have any concerns about the health of your greyhound, please contact [vets@gwic.nsw.gov.au](mailto:vets@gwic.nsw.gov.au).**