

Health Notes:

Canine Influenza (CIV) update

There are now two forms of CIV. Both are Influenza A variants. The older form is an H3N8 mutant from equine influenza which first showed up in racing greyhounds. That variant spread with the greyhound racing season. It is much less common now but appears to be maintained in shelter populations, large boarding facilities, and doggy daycare facilities.

The more recent strain is a mutant from an H3N2 avian influenza and is identical to the strain seen in China and Korea. It is thought to have arrived in retail rescue dogs imported from the Korean meat dog market. The H3N2 virus is highly contagious and viral shedding can occur by day 3 post infection. With both viruses, dogs are already shedding virus by the time they show clinical signs. Viral shedding is over by 5 to 10 days post infection. The cough may persist for a long time, and secondary bacterial and viral components of the kennel cough syndrome may be present.

Vaccines do exist for both strains of CIV. The vaccines are different for the different CIV strains and do not cross protect. The products offered are killed vaccines and two doses of the vaccines are necessary to develop an effective immune response. While the vaccines may not prevent an infection, they do reduce shed of the virus and the severity of clinical disease.

The viruses appear to be maintained in shelter populations, large boarding facilities, and doggy daycare facilities. Outbreaks in new regions can often be traced to the movement of shelter dogs. The good news is that neither variant seems to be mutating further, and neither form infects humans. Cats can become infected with the H3N2 strain.

Please refer to the health page on the BTCOA website for a refresher on precautions concerning CIV.