

ANIMAL HEALTH ALERT: Atypical Canine Infectious Respiratory Disease

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Dear Veterinary Colleagues:

Over the past several weeks, Los Angeles Veterinary Public Health Program (VPH) has received multiple reports of dogs experiencing an acute onset respiratory disease of unknown etiology. Similar outbreaks have recently been described in both Oregon and Colorado. There are news reports of similar outbreaks in dogs other states over the past two years.

A veterinarian in the San Fernando Valley recently reported seeing several dogs with cough and pneumonia that was not responsive to treatment, two of which died. In September, there were reports of outbreaks of dogs with moderate respiratory signs and negative PCR respiratory panels in the Malibu, Pacific Palisades, and El Segundo area associated primarily with boarding and day care facilities. Canine Respiratory panel PCR testing and additional testing for avian influenza and well as SARS-CoV-2 were negative. The outbreak appeared to stop, and a cause was not determined. Clinical signs were mostly mild to moderate with a few severe cases.

In Oregon and Colorado in recent weeks, there are reports of dogs becoming ill with respiratory disease of an unknown cause, primarily after visits to group settings for dogs. Coughing and other clinical signs in some cases last for several weeks. In other cases, dogs become ill rapidly, needing hospitalization.

So far during these outbreaks, there are no reports of similar illness in other animal species or in humans.

Cases of Atypical Canine Infectious Respiratory Diseases (aCIRD) is currently defined as the canine respiratory PCR test panel on the dog being negative, PLUS the dog having one of the following clinical scenarios:

- Chronic mild-moderate tracheobronchitis with a prolonged duration (6-8 weeks or longer) that is minimally or not responsive to antibiotics
- Chronic pneumonia that is minimally or not responsive to antibiotics
- Acute pneumonia that rapidly becomes severe and often leads to poor outcomes in as little as 24-36 hours.

In cases where a respiratory PCR panel was negative, additional free testing may potentially become available. Please call to discuss your case with our Veterinarian-On-Call, Mon-Friday 8am-5pm at 213-288-7060. vet@ph.lacounty.gov.

Veterinarians in Los Angeles County should report any cases seen in their practice using the link for the reporting form below. Please send in all relevant lab results along with the completed form. We also welcome any comments or insights into sources of exposure, patterns of transmission, or other insights into the cause.

Given the lack of information about the cause of aCIRD, veterinarians and dog owners are advised to:

1. Isolate sick dogs at home for 28 days part the first onset of illness, minimum, and isolate them when hospitalized
2. Quarantine exposed dogs at home for 14 days to monitor them for clinical signs
3. Utilize a disinfectant that is effective against non-enveloped viruses and other harder-to-kill pathogens, such as freshly formulated bleach or accelerated hydrogen peroxide products. Assure surfaces are clean before use. Always read disinfectant labels and follow instructions closely. Disinfect fomites such as doorknobs, keyboards, and animal equipment thoroughly and frequently.
4. Wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) when handling cases. Although this disease in dogs has not yet been reported to be zoonotic, it is prudent to wear a respirator mask, eye protection, gloves and clothing coverage (such as a gown) when handling these dogs.
5. Maximize ventilation
6. Remind dog owners to keep their dog home, away from day care, boarding kennels, grooming facilities, and dogs parks, if their dog is ill for any reason.
7. Report cases in Los Angeles County using this form: <http://ph.lacounty.gov/vet/docs/Forms/AtypicalCIRD.pdf>, and sent the completed form and all laboratory results to vet@ph.lacounty.gov / fax 213-481-2375.

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