

“Most people familiar with dogs have heard about Kennel cough, or canine infectious tracheobronchitis. Kennel Cough is usually a mild, cold-like syndrome caused by Bordetella bronchiseptica and Parainfluenza virus, among other bacteria and viruses.

Kennel Cough usually causes a significant hacking cough, and sometimes can be accompanied by runny nose and conjunctivitis.

In many instances, on the advice of your veterinarian, and often with the aid of cough suppressants, this cold-like syndrome can run its course without the need for antibiotics. Typically, the cough creates an annoying disease for the dog and its owner, but is extremely rare for it to be a significant threat to the health of the dog.

In late summer of 2023, a new, more dangerous atypical version of Kennel Cough was noted, Canine Infectious Respiratory Disease Complex (CIRDC).

CIRDC is usually presented with three different syndromes, including a prolonged version of the cough that lasted for 6-8 weeks, a chronic pneumonia form that was minimally responsive to antibiotics, and an acute pneumonia that was poorly responsive to antibiotics and resulted in rapid deaths.

Approximately 200 cases of this atypical respiratory disease complex were reported to the Oregon Veterinary Medical Association from late August 2023 to January 2024 and were concentrated mostly around larger population centers like Portland, Salem and Eugene.

Despite intensive research by veterinarians, state veterinarians and academic institutions, no new virus or bacteria has emerged as a cause for CIRDC.

It's suspected that old players that caused the typical Kennel Cough mixed in new ways to create CIRDC.

Luckily, according to the OVMA website, veterinarians have not reported a new case since January 2024.

Throughout the outbreak, we suspect that our clinic saw approximately 10 cases of the atypical CIRDC, with one suspected death.

We recommend using caution with exposing very young dogs or dogs with other serious health conditions to gathering places where a lot of dogs go, like boarding facilities and dog parks.

We recommend ensuring that all dogs are current on their Bordetella, Parainfluenza and Canine Influenza vaccines prior to frequenting places where dogs gather. If you notice a

cough, or runny nose or eyes, contact your veterinarian for advice and do not take your dog out in public where they might spread the disease further.

Your veterinarian will advise you on the precautions to take when bringing a dog with suspected CIRDC or Kennel Cough to the clinic to prevent further spread. It's worth taking precautions to keep your dog safe, but there is no need for panic.