

Message on the H3N2 Canine Influenza

Our Recommendations for Dog Owners:

- Consult with your veterinarian
- Avoid unnecessary interaction between your dog(s) and unknown dogs
- Monitor your dog(s) for signs of illness



Dear OCAS Friend:

Orange County Animal Service veterinarians are closely monitoring the status and spread of the H3N2 strain of the canine influenza virus (also known as dog flu). This is a very contagious virus and has recently surfaced in the southeast. At this time there are NO REPORTS OF H3N2 at Orange County Animal Services. However, as we closely monitor the spread of the virus, please allow us to share the following information with you, along with a request for your help.

Similar to the human flu, this virus is highly contagious and viral - meaning that it spreads from canine to canine through direct contact and air. Again, similar to humans, the young and senior populations are more susceptible to fall ill. The symptoms in which a dog may experience may vary. As a public shelter, Orange County Animal Services continuously monitors trends in animal health as a means to prevent illness or disease from reaching our animal population.

It is for this very reason that the shelter has a stringent daily cleaning process designed to help safeguard the shelter from respiratory illnesses such as H3Ns and other diseases easily spread through dog populations. This past year, the main dog housing building was outfitted with a dedicated ventilation system that continuously exchanges inside air with fresh outside air - helping mitigate the spread of airborne pathogens. Yet, even with these tools, we are not immune and we are asking for your help.

The facility is prepared to quarantine any dog suspected of the illness if signs are observed and test for illness. Treatment will be determined on a case by case basis. OCAS will release any animal to an authorized partner, if able to demonstrate that ability to provide appropriate medical care and safe guard other animals. The American Veterinary Medical Foundation (AVMA) has found the most common clinical signs to be a cough, nasal and/or ocular discharge, sneezing, lethargy and anorexia.

Visitors, rescue partners, volunteers and staff of Orange County Animal Services are reminded that they are required to sanitize hands between handling dogs and to change clothes and shoes before handling their owned dogs.

At this time, dog owners and rescue partners are encouraged to avoid unnecessary interaction between their dog(s) and unknown dogs - which includes dog parks. Per the AVMA, a vaccine is available for the H3N2 canine influenza and is recommended for dogs that participate in activities within a large group of others. The vaccine helps to reduce to risk of a dog contracting the canine influenza but may not all together prevent an infection.

Find out more about the H3N2 canine influenza from the AVMA here:

<https://www.avma.org/KB/Resources/Reference/Pages/Canine-Influenza-Backgrounder.aspx>