

NEW KENNEL COUGH VACCINE POLICY

As of September 5th, 2006, we are requiring that all dogs boarding at Muddy Creek be up to date on their kennel cough vaccine (*Bordetella bronchiseptica*) within six months of their stay. The decision to move from a yearly to a twice-a-year requirement was made to help insure that we are minimizing exposure to kennel cough within our boarding facilities. Although it is common practice for boarding facilities to have this policy, some explanation is warranted.

When dogs stay at any boarding facility, there are several infectious agents that, if dogs are exposed to, can cause sneezing, coughing and a runny nose. Some of these agents are viral (influenza, parainfluenza, reovirus), and some are bacterial (mycoplasma, klebsiella, *Bordetella bronchiseptica*). Fortunately, not all of these agents are common in boarding facilities.

In dog kennels, the most common of these agents are parainfluenza virus and *Bordetella bronchiseptica*, both of which are contagious but are routinely vaccinated against. However, a dog's immune system responds differently to a vaccine for a virus than it does for a vaccine against a bacterial organism. For example, multiple studies have shown that the parainfluenza vaccine (which is part of your dog's routine distemper vaccine) can last for up to 3 years whereas immunity against the classic kennel cough organism (*Bordetella bronchiseptica*) lasts for less than 6 months. In addition, there are multiple strains of *Bordetella bronchiseptica* which the kennel cough vaccine does not protect against. Finally, no vaccine is 100% protective, so even vaccinated dogs have a small chance of getting sick despite being up-to-date on their shots.

Please contact us or your local veterinarian if your dog needs a kennel cough booster before his/her stay with us. At this time, we accept either the intranasal or the injectable form of the vaccine. Because it takes the immune system 5-7 days to mount an effective response to the kennel cough vaccine, our policy requires that all boosters be scheduled approximately one week in advance of your pet's stay at Muddy Creek.

As we strive to remain a leader in the veterinary and boarding communities, we will continue to review and modify our protocols in order to maintain the safest environment possible for your pets. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or concerns.