



Upper Respiratory Infections

DAS does not recommend fostering a dog with an upper respiratory infection (URI) if you have pets in your home, as URI is highly contagious. If you choose to foster a sick pet, please be aware that there is a strong possibility of your pet contracting URI even if you keep your foster pet isolated. If your pets become sick, DAS cannot provide or reimburse you for medical care for your personal pets.

What is a URI?

A URI is an illness that can affect the lungs, air passages, throat, and nasal cavities. It's often caused by bacteria or a virus, and it's highly contagious. Fortunately, it's typically not life-threatening with rest and basic veterinary treatment. However, it can lead to complications such as pneumonia. One of the URIs currently spreading is canine influenza virus (CIV), commonly known as the canine flu.
Source: ASPCA

How do URIs spread?

Almost all dogs are susceptible to URIs. The Bordetella ("kennel cough") vaccine and CIV vaccines can offer some protection from URIs, however, neither provide 100% protection. Additionally, the vaccine for CIV is currently unavailable at most veterinary clinics due to supply chain delays. URIs spread faster inside shelters and boarding facilities because of the number of dogs housed closely together. URIs are spread primarily through the air by respiratory droplets from the coughing and sneezing of infected dogs. The illness can travel as much as 20 feet in the air and could be spread through air conditioning systems. The illness can also be spread through contact with contaminated surfaces. Dogs coughing or showing other signs of respiratory illness should be isolated from other dogs and cats and see a veterinarian as soon as possible. Clothing, equipment, surfaces, and hands should be cleaned and disinfected after exposure to dogs showing signs of URI.
Source: Centers for Disease Control

What are the symptoms?

The signs of URI in dogs are cough, runny nose, fever, lethargy, eye discharge, and reduced appetite. Not all dogs will show signs of illness. If your foster dog begins showing symptoms, please contact the DAS medical team through Anippanion and email DASFoster@Dallas.gov immediately. DAS will provide appropriate veterinary care for all foster dogs and most dogs recover within 2 to 3 weeks. However, some dogs may develop secondary bacterial infections, which may lead to more severe illness and/or pneumonia. If your foster dog is under treatment and is either not getting better or seems to be getting worse, contact the DAS Medical Team via Anippanion and email the DAS Foster Team immediately.
Source: Centers for Disease Control

How are URIs treated?

It is important to keep your foster dog hydrated and comfortable while their body fights the infection. DAS veterinarians may prescribe broad-spectrum antibiotics if a secondary bacterial infection is suspected. Running a humidifier near your foster's crate can help moisturize their airways. Keep activity to a minimum and ensure they always have water. If their appetite is reduced, try plain boiled chicken and rice instead of kibble.

