



## NEWS RELEASE

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### PREVENTING CANINE FLU IN YOUR PET

Wake County Animal Services is educating pet owners about canine influenza, a virus that can cause low-grade fever, coughing, sluggish behavior and decreased appetite in dogs. Although there are no confirmed cases of canine influenza in Wake County, the flu has infected dogs in other parts of the state.

“With a highly contagious virus like canine influenza, it’s important that we proactively educate pet owners about the symptoms of the virus and the protective measures they can take to help ensure their dogs remain healthy,” said Dr. Jennifer Federico, Wake County Animal Services Director. “We do not want to alarm pet owners. We simply want to raise awareness, so they can make good decisions to protect their dogs.”

Canine influenza is similar to other respiratory diseases, and testing by a veterinarian is the only way to confirm which disease is causing the symptoms. The virus can be present for up to three days before clinical signs appear. Generally, older dogs, younger dogs and dogs with a weakened immune system are more susceptible to the flu.

If you think your dog may have the flu, follow these steps:

- Call your veterinarian *before* going to their office and let them know your dog’s symptoms. This will allow the veterinarian to determine how to minimize exposure within the practice and prepare for your dog’s arrival; and
- Keep your dog away from other dogs and public areas until your dog is seen by your veterinarian.

Canine influenza is a very treatable disease. More than 95 percent of dogs that contract the flu recover within a few weeks.

Tips for keeping your pets safe include:

- Making sure your pet follows a recommended vaccine schedule;
- If you board your pet, make sure the kennel is clean and well maintained, and has an isolation (at least 50 feet away) and care plan for dogs that develop signs of

kennel cough or other illness;

- Do not take your pets to dog parks or other places where dogs mingle if they have signs of kennel cough or other infectious diseases, and keep your dog at home for three weeks after recovery;
- Make sure your pet has current ID tags with your address and phone number clearly displayed so that your pet can be returned to you as soon as possible and so you can be contacted immediately if your pet is brought to the Animal Center; and
- Keep your pet in overall good health – a strong immune system is the best defense against infection.

More information about canine influenza is available at [wakegov.com/pets/health/Pages/canineflu](http://wakegov.com/pets/health/Pages/canineflu).

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