



Hershey's Mill

Pet Medical Alert

2023 Mystery Respiratory Disease in Dogs

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Many of you may have heard reports on the TV or read articles in the newspaper/magazines about a "new" respiratory disease affecting dogs. The condition was first noted on the west coast of the US but has now been identified in 14 states, including some in the mid-Atlantic. While the disease can be serious in dogs, there currently is no need for owners to panic. Awareness of we can do is important at this time.

1. What is the mystery illness? Veterinary scientists have not yet been able to identify the agent (bacteria or virus) of this pneumonia-like illness. The American Veterinary Medical Association has identified the following signs and symptoms which you should be aware of:

- Chronic mild-moderate tracheobronchitis – a sudden long-term inflammation which is non-responsive to antibiotics.
- Chronic pneumonia not responsive to antibiotics.

- Acute pneumonia may quickly become severe.
- Difficult or rapid breathing, wheezing, dehydration, fever, nasal or eye discharge, weight loss, loss of appetite and lethargy.

2. How is the illness being treated? Since the causative agent has yet to be identified, treatment is aimed at mitigating the clinical signs and facilitating the dog's recovery. This may include:

- Supportive oxygen therapy.
- Nebulization – administering medication in the form of a mist inhaled into the dog's lungs.
- Antibiotics to protect or treat secondary infection.
- Measures to ensure the dog has adequate nutrition and hydration.

3. How to protect your dogs from mystery illness. The general advice is to minimize contact with other dogs:

- Avoid dog parks/excise areas.
- Avoid doggy daycare or boarding.
- Avoid grooming shops.
- Use walkers/sitters who will take your dog solo.
- **Make sure your dog is fully vaccinated.**
- **Make sure that your dog is in good general health which includes a good diet.**

Consult your veterinarian should you have any questions or concerns

