Animal Shelter Canine Influenza Basics

What is it?

- Canine influenza, or dog flu, is a contagious respiratory infection caused by a flu virus.
- Flu viruses are always changing, however, this virus has only been seen in dogs at this time and is not a risk to humans.
- Canine influenza affects dogs of all ages and breeds and can develop at any time of the year.
- Like most viruses, canine influenza is commonly spread when dogs sneeze and cough on other dogs or items like toys and blankets.

How do I prevent it?

1. Minimize	2. Recognize	3. Educate
Take precautions with group adoption events, open houses and bringing potential adopters' animals into the shelter. The more dogs are around other dogs, the greater the risk of them becoming sick. Talk to your shelter veterinarian about vaccinations.	**Common signs of canine influenza can include fever, reduced appetite, coughing, nasal discharge, eye discharge and increased tiredness.**	**Remind visitors and staff that germs travel on hands, clothes and feet. Visitors shouldn't pet one dog after another without cleaning their hands. Make sure there are places for visitors and staff to clean their hands.**

You have it, now what?

- If you suspect that a dog has canine influenza, separate the sick dog from the healthy dogs. Make sure sick dogs have their own bowls, bedding, blankets or toys. Sick dogs should always be cared for after healthy dogs.
- All items or surfaces that have had contact with the sick dog should be disinfected, including any clothes that the caretaker wears.
- You should also monitor any dogs that were near the sick dog, as they may be sick as well, and if possible separate them.
- Treatment for canine influenza consists of supporting the sick dog's immune system as much as possible. Most dogs recover in two to three weeks.
- If you suspect canine influenza, it is required that you report it to the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development at 800-292-3939.
- Shelters should contact and work with their veterinarian(s) whenever an animal is sick or injured.

Michigan Department of AGRICULTURE & Rural Development