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Animal Services Facility and Adoption Center (ASFAC) Alert

(Effective January 2024)



Streptococcus Zooepidemicus (Strep Zoo) | What is it?

Strep Zoo is a bacterium normally found in horses, cattle, and pigs that rarely causes disease. When this bacterium infects immunocompromised dogs, it may cause severe pneumonia. There is no vaccine for Strep Zoo and few warning signs. The bacterium has caused outbreaks of fatal pneumonia in shelter dogs worldwide due to the stressed and crowded conditions in shelters.

Symptoms of Strep Zoo

Symptoms can be attributed to other illnesses, so ASFAC recommends that any time a pet shows signs of any illness, it is important to seek veterinary care.

- Sneezing
- Nasal discharge
- Difficulty breathing
- Lethargy (low energy)
- Fever
- Coughing blood
- Vomiting

Because this bacterium can progress quickly, pet owners should seek immediate care if they see any signs.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I vaccinate my animal against Strep Zoo?

There is no vaccine for Strep Zoo, but immunocompromised dogs are highly susceptible to contracting it. Pet owners are strongly encouraged to protect their pets against common illnesses like kennel cough, parvovirus, and canine distemper.

Is there a treatment for Strep Zoo?

Strep Zoo, on its own, is easily treatable with antibiotics if treated promptly. In most cases, once treated with an antibiotic, a dog with Strep Zoo will fully recover and no longer express disease symptoms.

Where does Strep Zoo come from?

Strep Zoo is a bacterium found in dogs, usually in kennel and Animal Shelter type settings where stressed and crowded conditions exist. It is normally found in horses, cattle, and pigs but rarely causes disease.

Can a dog transfer Strep Zoo to a human?

It is rare for a dog to transmit Strep Zoo to a human.

What is the incubation period for Strep Zoo?

The incubation period is typically less than a week, but it can be transmitted up to a few weeks later.

Is it possible for me to take this germ home on my clothes after interacting with dog's sick with Strep Zoo?

This is possible but very unlikely. It is always recommended you wash your hands and change your clothes if you've interacted with animals that appear to be sick before interacting with your animals.

I recently adopted a dog from the ASFAC, what should I look out for?

If your new pet is not displaying any signs or symptoms, there is no cause for concern regarding Strep Zoo. However, pet owners are always reminded to monitor their pet's health, maintain a relationship with a veterinarian, and seek medical attention when noticing signs of illness in a pet.

What can the community do to help?

ASFAC recommends pet owners keep their pets up to date on vaccinations and spay and neuter their pets.

For more information and to receive updates, call (301) 780-7200.

