

Best Ways to Protect Your Dog From Illnesses and Other Dangers

Dog parents are worried about protecting their babies. You do all you can to help them stay safe and healthy, but you're not sure if you're doing enough. You're not alone in worrying about your dogs, and our tips will give you some peace of mind.

1. Be Aware of the Dangers of Canine Flu

At certain times of the year, we hear about outbreaks of influenza among people. Dog owners need to be aware that your pets can get the flu, too. According to [ABC News](#), in 2015, canine influenza A H3N2 virus, or dog flu, was identified in the United States and has been reported in



every state since. Dogs spread it to one another by barking, sneezing, or coughing in close proximity. This means that your dog is at a greater risk of contracting the flu if he spends time in kennels, dog parks, or doggie daycares.

One way to protect your dog is to see your veterinarian for a canine influenza vaccine. While the vaccine will not prevent infection, it can decrease the severity of the illness and is recommended for dogs that are socially active. Another way to protect your dog is to ask your doggie daycare provider about their policies for

ill animals. According to ABC News, dogs diagnosed with H3N2 must be isolated for 21 days.

When you hear of an outbreak of dog flu in your area, keep your dog at home. Be alert for [symptoms](#), including a lingering cough, sneezing, high fever, decreased appetite, lethargy, and green discharge from the nose or eyes. Keep in mind that not all dogs exhibit symptoms. If you suspect that your dog has canine influenza, take him to your vet to be tested. Your vet should prescribe medication to combat secondary infections or fluids to keep your dog hydrated.

2. Talk to Your Vet about Protecting Your Dog Against Preventable Illnesses

One of the best ways to prevent illnesses in your dog is to take him for regularly scheduled visits with your vet. Many illnesses are [preventable](#) with regular care. For example, heartworm is easily prevented with a monthly pill. While some vets don't treat dogs for heartworm in winter because it is a parasite spread through mosquito bites, you should advocate for your dog to be treated year-round to be on the safe side.

Another illness you should talk to your vet about preventing is dental disease. Regularly brushing your dog's teeth, avoiding giving him soft foods, and having your vet check his teeth annually helps reduce the risk. It's important to talk to your vet if your dog's teeth or gums

concern you because, according to [VCA Animal Hospitals](#), more than 80 percent of dogs over the age of three have active dental disease.

Your vet also may professionally clean your dog's teeth to combat dental disease. It's better to pay for the cost of the cleaning than run the risk of heart disease, kidney and liver disease, and cancer that are linked to dental disease.

3. Protect Your Dog Inside and Outside Your Home

Just as you childproof your home, make sure that it is a safe environment for your dog. [Puppy-proofing](#) protects your dog no matter his age. Keep cleaning supplies, detergents, insecticides, fertilizers, antifreeze, medications, and other potential poisons locked in a cabinet your dog cannot access. Do not feed him apples, apricots, cherries, onions, peaches, avocado, macadamia nuts, raisins, or tomato. Also, regularly check his toys to be sure they are not frayed or broken or pose a choking hazard.

As for the exterior of your home, installing a fence is one of the best ways to protect your dog. If you live in an area that prohibits above-ground fencing, install an [electric fence](#) to keep your dog safely at home. Also, regularly check your yard to be sure it does not contain any [plants](#), such as mums, English ivy, or begonias that are poisonous to dogs.

You can protect your dog from illnesses and common dangers if you are proactive. Educate yourself about canine flu. Regularly visit your vet and prevent against common illnesses and dental disease. Also, ensure your home's interior and exterior are safe environments for your dog.

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