

CASE OF THE MONTH

CANINE INFECTIOUS RESPIRATORY DISEASE COMPLEX (CIRDC)

Pet: Hazel*, a 1 year-old Irish Wolfhound



HAZEL'S STORY:

In the late summer, Hazel's family had some travel plans, and unfortunately, they couldn't bring their friendly Irish Wolfhound with them. Thankfully, they found a great boarding solution, and Hazel spent a few days doing exciting doggy things with the other canine guests at the kennel. A few days after Hazel and her family returned home, she developed a mild cough. Her family brought her to their veterinarian, where she was started on a precautionary course of antibiotics. Initially, Hazel seemed to improve, but after a few days on medication, she got worse again. Her cough became harsher and more frequent, and her appetite started to suffer. She even seemed to be restless and uncomfortable, preferring to stand rather than lay down and rest.

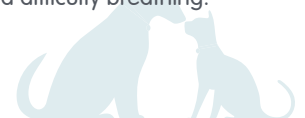
When antibiotics and humid air failed to improve her condition, the family veterinarian recommended that Hazel be evaluated at the local veterinary specialty hospital.

In the ER, bloodwork and chest x-rays were performed, revealing that Hazel had developed pneumonia. Because of her recent history of contact with other dogs at the boarding facility, Canine Infectious Respiratory Disease Complex (CIRDC) was the primary suspect as the cause of the pneumonia.

ABOUT THE CONDITION: CIRDC

Canine Infectious Respiratory Disease Complex is commonly referred to as Bordetella or kennel cough. It is a highly contagious respiratory disease characterized by a harsh, hacking, or goose-honking cough. It is caused by infections with one or more viral and bacterial pathogens, including canine parainfluenza virus, Bordetella bronchiseptica, and strep. Stressed pets, and those spending time in group settings with other dogs are more at risk for infection. In recent years, higher rates of infectious respiratory disease have been observed in dogs.

CIRDC is often spread by droplets and aerosols containing one or more of the causative viruses or bacteria. Usually, dogs need to be pretty close to each other for a few minutes or more in order to spread the infection. CIRDC is usually very mild, causing a short-lived cough and occasional conjunctivitis. It typically resolves without the need for antibiotics or other prescription medications. In rare cases, CIRDC can progress to a more severe illness characterized by pneumonia, lethargy, fever, appetite loss, and difficulty breathing.



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There are a few different “kennel cough” vaccines available through veterinarians. The best vaccines provide coverage for a combination of bacteria and viruses including Bordetella bronchiseptica, canine parainfluenza, and canine adenovirus-2, and are successful at stimulating immunity at the mucosal surfaces – the nasal and oral passages. Unfortunately, while these vaccines do a great job at reducing the incidence and severity of CIRDC, they cannot completely prevent the disease. Veterinarians recommend kennel cough vaccination for most dogs staying at boarding kennels, daycares, or grooming facilities for any duration of time.

TREATMENT

Because many of the causative agents behind CIRDC are viral, antibiotic use is not always recommended for the treatment of kennel cough, and is often unrewarding. Cases that progress to pneumonia are more likely to require antibiotic care, especially if tests reveal bacteria present within the lungs.

Hazel was hospitalized for 6 days in a veterinary ICU. Tests showed a bacterial infection within her lungs. A culture and sensitivity test helped her doctors to choose the exact IV antibiotics that her infection would respond to. During her time in the hospital Hazel needed IV fluids, antibiotics, pain medication, nausea control, nutritional management, and oxygen support. We are happy to report that she made a full recovery, and is now back at home with her family.

CLAIM OUTCOME

Hazel needed \$10,300 in veterinary care for her illness. Pets Plus Us reimbursed her family \$7,200 of those fees. We are so happy we could help you and your family breathe easier, Hazel!

*Details changed for privacy.

**Sample claim for illustrative purposes - details have been changed for privacy. Based on 2023 PTZ Insurance Services Ltd. actual claims data. Dollar amounts have been rounded down.

