

Press Release

Eric Crosslin
City of Wichita Falls
Public Information Office

September 15, 2018

Preliminary Distemper Diagnosis at Shelter

As of August 14, 2018, City of Wichita Falls Animal Services confirms that two dogs became ill while at the shelter and were immediately taken to a local veterinary clinic for examination. The veterinarian's preliminary diagnosis is distemper. Further testing will be done through Texas A&M and final results will be received within 4-5 days. The dogs in question were picked up as strays in the 76301 and 76306 zip codes. Shelter staff members are already taking proactive measures, such as vaccinating, cleaning and disinfecting, to keep the highly contagious disease from spreading.

Distemper is a highly contagious airborne virus that is ever present in the environment. Stray and unvaccinated animals are at a higher risk of contracting and transmitting the virus. Pets can also be exposed to the virus from wild animals.

Symptoms include a thick discharge in nose and eyes, diarrhea, fever, coughing, loss of appetite, twitching and neurological signs. Dogs of any age are most susceptible. Dogs may be infected and spreading the virus without exhibiting any symptoms. The incubation of distemper once a pet is exposed is typically within one to six weeks.

If you have reclaimed or adopted a dog within the last three weeks and your dog is showing symptoms, Animal Services recommends that you contact your full service veterinarian immediately and do not take your animal out in public. Distemper is a vaccine preventable disease. Animal Services encourages everyone to be proactive and vaccinate your pets:

- A series of vaccinations is administered to puppies to increase the likelihood of building immunity when the immune system has not yet fully matured.
- Avoid gaps in the immunization schedule and make sure distemper vaccinations are up to date.
- Avoid contact with infected animals and wildlife
- Use caution when socializing puppies or unvaccinated dogs at parks, training classes, doggy day cares or anywhere dogs are allowed in public.
- Pet ferrets should also be vaccinated against Distemper.

Media Point of Contact: Lou Kriedler, Director of Health, Wichita Falls Wichita County Public Health District, can be reached at 940-761-8894 until 2 pm and after 2 pm by calling the Police Non-emergency number-940-720-5000.

--
Kind regards,



Eric Crosslin - Public Information Officer
p: 940.761.7402
e: eric.crosslin@wichitafallstx.gov
w: wichitafallstx.gov
s: @cityofwf

