

Strep zoo Information and FAQs

What is Strep zoo?

Strep zoo is a bacteria that can cause progressive and severe respiratory disease.

Why isn't the shelter able to accept dog intake unless they have an urgent medical concern?

Reason 1) Not taking in the dog protects it from exposure and illness.

Reason 2) Strep zoo is very hard to eradicate in full shelters. By halting intake, it creates a "clean break" that allows the disease to run its course without infecting new animals, and a less crowded environment is one of the most effective ways to get rid of it.

If I found a stray dog, what are my options?

Option 1) If you've found a small breed dog or a puppy under 6 months, please contact 311. We may be able to direct you to a different organization.

Option 2) If you've found a large dog, you can A) Hold onto them and look for their owner using our tips at cityofsacramento.org/found. There is a very good chance you'll find the owner within a day or two if you use those tips. A spare room, garage, crate (with regular breaks), or bathroom are good short term housing options. If you complete foster paperwork, we can provide supplies, vaccines, and medical care while the dog is in your home. Then you can bring it back after the intake closure is lifted. B) You can reach out to friends, family, or social media networks to foster the dog. Many people are animal lovers and have availability to do this. Here is a template you can use:

I found a lost dog, but due to disease outbreak the shelter has closed intake to save lives. Can anyone foster the dog for a week or two until the closure is over? The shelter will provide medical care, food, vaccines, supplies, and support. They ask that you live in the Sacramento area. If so, let me know when you would be available to meet up. Then you can contact the shelter to get set up as a foster parent.

How long will the intake closure last?

The closure is expected to last through 2/4/26, but may be extended another week depending on disease progression.

Can I/Should I still adopt a dog?

Adoptions are still open. Here's why:

Reason 1) The fastest way to beat the illness is to stop new dogs from coming in and getting existing dogs out. One of the main reasons dogs get Strep zoo is the chronic stress of the shelter environment, causing them to be immunocompromised.

Reason 2) All dogs have been treated with an antibiotic injection that will make it much less likely that they will develop complications.

Reason 3) If they do develop symptoms, we will provide treatment for 10 days after they leave the shelter, and will tell you exactly what to watch for and when to contact us.

If I adopt and have pets at home, are they at risk?

Your pets at home are unlikely to get Strep zoo. Here's why:

Reason 1) Dogs are not the preferred host for Strep zoo, and it does not tend to spread outside of a crowded, stressful shelter environment, especially if your current pets are not immunocompromised by some other illness.

Reason 2) The antibiotic vaccine we've given to all exposed dogs will substantially reduce risk of transmission, especially in a home environment.

What if I adopted or reclaimed a dog shortly before the outbreak?

If you adopted or picked up your lost dog between 1/21/26 and 1/28/26, we have attempted to send you an email to inform you about Strep zoo and provide options. It is unlikely your dog will have the illness, but if your dog has symptoms including: sneezing, runny nose, trouble breathing, low energy or acting tired, fever, coughing up blood, or vomiting, please call 311 or 916-808-7387 to be connected with our team. It is also more likely to be kennel cough, a common and much less serious illness. Regardless, we'd like to stay informed about your pet's condition. Most dogs show symptoms within 1 week.

Can other animals or people get Strep zoo from an infected dog?

While technically possible, it is extremely unlikely.