
Distemper Agreement for Fosters and Adopters

Thank you for fostering or adopting a dog from Austin Pets Alive! Our mission is to make sure that every pet has a home, especially those that are less fortunate than others.

The dog that you are agreeing to care for has been exhibiting symptoms that may indicate Distemper (Distemper Watch), or has been diagnosed with Distemper. Distemper is a common, but serious, canine virus that can last 1-3 months in the body. Distemper is passed like a cold, through contact with secretions. Luckily, Distemper does die in the environment quickly - it can only live a maximum of a few days without a host. A home is required for a dog with this condition because housing them in a kennel without consistent monitoring would negatively affect the dog's mental state and immune system.

Distemper can cause any of the following symptoms:

- Cough/chest congestion, snotty nose/severe nasal discharge, nasal congestion, pneumonia
- Not eating/loss of interest in food, vomiting
- Extreme lethargy
- Diarrhea (sometimes bloody)
- Eye discharge/decreased tear production/squinting/not wanting to open eyes/crust around the eyes
- Ear infections
- Fever (differentiates it from Kennel Cough)
- Dandruff, yeasty/infected skin, change in skin condition or foul odor (even after bathing)
- Temporary paralysis
- Crying out in pain or disorientation
- Inability to walk straight or giving the appearance of being off balance
- Hard or flaky/peeling nose or paw pads (usually not immediate)
- Seizures (usually not immediate)
- Night terrors (usually not immediate)
- Twitching/tics/tremors or other neurologic symptoms (usually not immediate; the only symptom that typically lasts longer than 2 weeks)

Most shelters and veterinary clinics in the United States euthanize for this disease because it was once thought to be untreatable. Through our work at APA!, we have found that it is treatable, however, the recovery process can be lengthy. Our plan and your mission is to keep treating every symptom that comes up (through our Clinic) and outlast the virus. If we can keep the dog alive through it, then he/she will improve dramatically once the virus has left the body.

Your role is to make sure (please initial each item indicating that you understand):

_____ This dog does not come into contact with any dog that you are not 100% sure is fully vaccinated for Distemper. A fully-vaccinated dog is a dog who has received at least 2 DHLPP or DAPP vaccines, one of which was given in the last 3 years and at the age of 5 months or older, and THAT:

- IS NOT immunocompromised (happens in geriatric [elderly] dogs); AND
- IS NOT on prednisone or steroids; AND
- DOES NOT have cancer, Cushing's Disease, or any other severe disease that is compromising their health.

This requires keeping a 10ft+ distance at all times and preventing fence communication in yards.

_____ No water bowls or food bowls are left outside at any time for other wildlife or dogs to access.

_____ This dog does not drink from any community water bowls/sources at parks, other public places, puddles.

_____ No dogs come into your house that are not fully vaccinated (see above).

_____ This dog does not visit any public places like restaurants, parks, friend's houses, etc.

_____You administer all medications and do not run out of any or fail to give any, even for a day, to prevent rebound pneumonia from occurring.

_____You provide nutrition daily, either through feeding regularly, syringe feeding, force feeding, or tube feeding (we will show you how if necessary in puppies); you offer many different types of food to pique interest.

Please also acknowledge the following policies:

_____ **Availability for Adoption:** "Distemper watch" dogs are available for adoption, but the adopter must receive a Medical Consult (MC) from our Medical Team prior to adoption and the dog will be a medical pre-adoption. Dogs diagnosed with Distemper are available on a case by case basis based on Medical Team approval; the adopter must also receive a MC from our Medical Team prior to adoption and the dog will also be a medical pre-adoption.

_____ **60 Mile Radius:** A dog with a Distemper label may only be adopted by an adopter who lives within a 60 mile radius of our Town Lake Animal Center (TLAC) location. Our initial response to an adoption inquiry will include this disclaimer, but we ask that fosters also vet any potential adopters to make sure they live within this 60 miles radius. If you're adopting a dog with a Distemper label, you are acknowledging that you live within a 60 mile radius of TLAC by initialing this line.

_____ **Surgery Scheduling:** In addition to meeting our general eligibility requirements for spay/neuter surgery, "Distemper watch" dogs cannot have spay/neuter surgery until 2 weeks after they are cleared. Dogs diagnosed with Distemper cannot have spay/neuter surgery until they have been symptom free for a minimum of 30 days.

_____ **Clearance:** APA's Medical Team has sole discretion over clearing a dog. For the Medical Team to clear a dog, "Distemper watch" dogs must have had 14 days of no new or worsening symptoms while in the same home, and dogs diagnosed with Distemper must have had 30 days with no new or worsening symptoms while in the same home. If the dog moves locations, the clearance period starts over to make sure we are able to keep accurate records of the dog's symptoms. If the dog does not have any new or worsening symptoms within the requisite time period, the dog must be scheduled for a recheck at the Clinic to be cleared (subject to very limited exceptions).

_____ **Treatment for Distemper:** After your pre-adoption, any Distemper treatment for your dog MUST be with APA! OR you must sign a waiver stating that you have decided to pursue Distemper treatment with your veterinarian and that if your veterinarian recommends euthanasia, you must contact APA! prior to taking any such action as APA! has sole approval rights regarding a pre-adopted dog's euthanasia.

_____ **Dental Disclaimer:** The Distemper virus may have some long term effects on a dog's teeth. If severe, APA! may decide to do a dental cleaning, in its sole discretion, prior to a dog's adoption, but this would be rare. You are hereby on notice that you may need to incorporate dental cleanings as a regular part of your dog's routine medical care.

_____ **Seizure Disclaimer:** If you are adopting a Distemper dog that has seizures, APA! will provide anti-convulsant medications until the dog is stable (the average time for this is 2 months, but it could be up to 4 months in severe cases). The dog will not be outcomed to your legal custody until he/she is stable. Once outcomed to your legal custody, it will be your responsibility to pursue care for this condition with your vet, adhering to their medication and monitoring recommendations. We advise that you speak with your vet about drug costs/options, particularly the possibility of acquiring medications online (e.g., <https://www.goodrx.com/>).

With your help, this dog will have the best chance at life. Thank you for being willing to help him/her through it.

Dog's Name

Caretaker's Name Printed

Caretaker's Signature