At Boxer Rescue LA we receive dogs from a variety of shelters and different environments. Even with strict sanitation protocols, animals coming in may be carriers of some common ailments. Your new boxer may or may not have been exposed to these conditions. Here's what to look for and what to do.

KENNEL COUGH (KC) Just like kids that share cold germs in school, dogs in kennel situations can share a virus called Kennel Cough (Bordetella). Dogs receive annual Bordetella vaccination but with so many strains of the virus or the timing of the vaccine, it may not be 100% effective. KC is a virus that can spread by air or direct contact. Dogs may not show any symptoms for a week to 10 days. The symptoms include a runny nose, runny eyes, sneezing, a hacking cough and/or gagging up white foam. This condition can sound a look worse than it is. KC is very common and very treatable.

KC is a self-limiting condition, meaning dogs can recover on their own. With rescue dogs the use of various antibiotics to aid recovery and prevent secondary infection (pneumonia) is recommended. Keep the dog warm and quiet. It is not uncommon for a dog with KC to not feel like eating. You can tempt them with dog chicken soup (just boiled chicken in its own broth). The intake of liquids is important to prevent dehydration. If you dog is not drinking water, you can give them some clear Pedialyte in a baster or oral syringe.

To aid in clearing the lungs of build up: A humidifier (or steamy bathroom) can be helpful to relieve congestion. Steam your dog for 30 minutes or more. Then perform Coupage. Coupage is performed by striking the chest on both sides gently but firmly with cupped hands. This action helps loosen secretions trapped in the lower airways, allowing them to be more effectively cleared by coughing.

A fantastic product to help in KC recovery is TOSSA K by Amber Naturalz. Check their website for store locations or purchase online. www.ambernaturalz.com

Recovery of KC can take a week or so. Some good information to know is that a dog's normal body temperature is 101.1 to 103. If your dogs temp rises above 103, KC could have elevated. Normal discharge from KC is typically clear or white. If discharge changes colors to yellow or green, a stronger antibiotic may be required. A quick way to check if your dog is okay is to check for pink gums that when pressed leave a white imprint. Pale gums may indicate that KC has progressed.

KC can be contagious to your resident dogs. A healthy dog that has been vaccinated does have protection, but some strains of the virus may get through. To reduce the risk, do not share water or food bowls. Have dogs sleep separately and avoid licking mouths. Clean up any discharge to avoid cross contamination.

Contact BRLA if symptom arise and antibiotics can be sent out, or you can consult you own vet.

DIARRHEA: It is extremely common for newly adopted dogs to have loose stool for the first few days. The change in life can affect their gastric systems. This should resolve itself in a few days. You can help firm their stool by adding canned pumpkin, cottage cheese or cooked rice to their food. You can also use 2 teaspoons of Pepto-Bismal or Kaopectate every 4 hours. Metrozolone (Flagyl) is the most common medication use to help with diarrhea

GIARDIA If the diarrhea continues or becomes bloody, the dog may have picked up giardia. Giardia are microscopic protozoans, tiny one-celled parasitic life forms. They can be spread by dogs stepping on contaminated ground or by drinking infected water. Giardia is treatable with medication, usually Flagyl or Albon. A fecal test can detect Giardia.

Because Giardia crosses species and can infect people, sanitation is important. Be sure to wash hands after cleaning your dog or removing feces from yard. Pick up waste as soon as possible. When traveling with your dog, owners should prevent them from drinking potentially infected water from puddles or streams.