

Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)

Recent Updates:

11/6/20: Updated information regarding isolation and quarantine and management of pets in the shelter.

1. What is a novel coronavirus?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses. Many of them infect animals, but some coronaviruses from animals can evolve (change) and infect humans, then spread from person-to-person. This is what happened with the current novel coronavirus. Diseases from coronaviruses in people typically cause mild to moderate illness, like the common cold. Some, like the SARS or MERS viruses, cause serious infections like pneumonia.

2. What are common symptoms of COVID-19 in humans?

Symptoms of COVID-19 may include one or more of the following: fever, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chills, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, sore throat, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, congestion or runny nose, or new loss of taste or smell. This list of symptoms is not complete. For more information about symptoms, see ph.lacounty.gov/covidcare.

3. How does COVID-19 spread?

Like other respiratory illnesses, human coronaviruses most commonly spread to others from an infected person through:

- Droplets produced through coughing, sneezing or talking
- Close personal contact, such as caring for an infected person
- COVID-19 may also spread by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching the mouth, nose, or eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. Some people get COVID-19 without ever showing symptoms, but they can still spread the infection to others.

4. Can pets become sick with and spread COVID-19?

To date in the U.S. there have been a handful of reports of animals testing positive for COVID-19, mostly after close contact with people with COVID-19. It appears the virus can spread from people to animals in some situations. However, there have not been reports of humans or pet owners contracting COVID-19 from their pets. At this time, there is no evidence that pets, including dogs and cats, can spread COVID-19 to humans.

5. How can I protect myself from contracting COVID-19 while at work?

Staff with COVID-19 related symptoms, should stay home and speak to their



Key Messages:

There is no evidence that pets can spread COVID-19 to humans.

Pets can spread other diseases to people, however, so wash your hands before and after handling pets.

Animal care and control staff should follow standard protocols for handling sick animals or those exposed to disease.

For more information:

Los Angeles County
Department of Public Health

Call 2-1-1

<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/>

Centers for Disease Control
and Prevention

<http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/novel-coronavirus-2019.html>

Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)

provider about getting tested. Those who have tested positive for COVID-19 or who have been told by their provider that they have COVID-19 should [isolate](#) and those who are close contacts with a lab confirmed COVID-19 case should stay home from work and [quarantine](#). Face coverings should be worn throughout the shelter and physical distancing should be implemented in all areas of the shelter as much as possible.

When physical distancing is not possible (e.g. during veterinary procedures), shelter staff must use appropriate personal protective equipment. See the [Guidance for Veterinary Practice Staff](#) for more information.

6. What should I do if I have to interact with a pet who was in close contact with a person with respiratory symptoms?

Although the risk of disease transmission from the fur appears to be low, shelter staff are advised to take the following precautions:

- Wear a mask, gown and gloves. Recommended PPE based on companion animal history can be found [here](#).
- Wash your hands with soap and water before and after each interaction with animals.
- Do not allow pets to lick your face during handling and avoid excessive interaction such as petting, cuddling, handfeeding, and sharing food.

7. What should I do if I have to retrieve the pet from a COVID-19 infected residence?

- When possible, avoid entering the home to prevent person-to-person transmission. The pet should be collected by staff while maintaining at least 6 feet of distance from people living in the home and limiting contact with the environment. Both the animal control worker and the resident handing over the animal should wear appropriate facial coverings during this brief interaction. Items such as bowls, leashes and toys should not be removed from the household.
- Wash hands before and after handling the pet (use soap and water or a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol). Back at the shelter, disinfect the truck, wash hands, and change your clothing.
- If collection of the pet involves interacting with people in the COVID-19 infected household or being exposed to contaminated environments, the use of [PPE](#) and training in its proper use is recommended. Remove and discard or disinfect and launder (if applicable) all PPE and footwear after the animal is brought back to the shelter.

8. What should I do if the pet is impounded at the shelter?

- Wear gloves and gowns/coveralls that can be laundered and dedicated footwear when handling the pet for intake.
- Wash hands between handling of each animal, after taking off gloves.
- It is no longer recommended to bathe or apply topical disinfectant to these animals or pets.
- Immediately disinfect surfaces in common use areas where exposed animals have contacted.
- Isolate the pet in a room designated for similarly exposed animals, away from the general population. Exposed animals should be separated by species (e.g., dogs in a separate ward from cats).
- Post signage on the kennel identifying the pet, its exposure and “Do Not Touch”.
- Take the pet outside for elimination/exercise in a dedicated area that can be sanitized but do not allow direct contact with other people and animals.

Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)

- Monitor each animal closely for signs of illness and report to the Department of Public Health, Veterinary Public Health Program immediately if you notice signs of illness.
- Designate limited staff that have access to this room for feeding, cleaning, and medical care – to limit how much of the virus could be spread to different parts of the shelter. Staff who are at increased risk of complications from COVID-19 should avoid contact with these animals. Maintain a log of all staff who have had contact with the animal for occupational health monitoring.
- Follow shelter protocols for standard disinfection of the shelter and vehicles used to transport animals. Clean the designated room last in relation to the entire shelter population.
- Increase sanitation of high-touch areas (handles, desks, leashes, containers, computers).
- Release the pet to the owner as soon as possible. If the exposed pet must be adopted or fostered out, hold it for 14 days from the last known exposure at the shelter first.