

Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) & Pets

Recent Updates:

11/6/20: Updates regarding transmission included.



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 after handling pets.

Good hygiene and veterinary care always helps keep pets and people healthy.

Where can the public go for more information?

**Los Angeles County
Department of Public
Health Dial 2-1-1
California Department
of Public Health
916-558-1784
Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention
800-CDC-INFO
800-232-4636**

1. What is a coronavirus?

There are many types of coronaviruses that cause disease in humans and animals. These viruses are all different and are only distantly related to each other. In humans, some coronaviruses cause mild upper-respiratory tract illness like the common cold, while a few can cause more severe disease such as SARS or MERS. In animals, there are coronaviruses that can cause a variety of symptoms in pets including respiratory disease or diarrhea, depending on the type of animal and the exact type of coronavirus. To date, coronaviruses that cause disease in pets are not known to be contagious to people.

2. What is COVID-19?

Some coronaviruses from animals can evolve (change) into a new human coronavirus that can spread from person to person. This is what happened with the coronavirus known as SARS-CoV-2 which causes the disease known as COVID-19 in humans.

3. How does COVID-19 spread between humans?

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.

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5. I have a pet. What should I do?

Although the risk of COVID-19 infection in pets is low, there are other diseases that can cause illness in animals and spread from animals to people. Because of this, washing hands after being around animals is always a good idea. Include pets in your family's preparedness planning.

6. I am sick with COVID-19 and I have pets or other animals. What should I do?

You should restrict contact with pets and other animals while you are sick with COVID-19, just like you would around other people. When possible, have another member of your household care for your animals while you are sick. If you are sick, avoid contact with your pet, including petting, snuggling, being kissed or licked, and sharing food. If you must care for your pet or be around animals while you are sick, wash your hands before and after you interact with pets and wear a facemask or face covering. Also, please notify your public health point of contact that you have animals in your home.

7. Can I walk my dog if I am under quarantine or isolation?

No. If you are feeling sick and are placed under isolation for COVID-19, or you were placed under a 14-day quarantine after exposure to COVID-19, you cannot leave your home during that time. Have a family member take your dog for walks during that time. Alternately, ask or hire someone else to walk your dog. When the person arrives to take your dog for a walk, both of you should be wearing face coverings and strive to stay 6 feet or more apart. Wash your hands both before and after the process of transferring the dog between people. Consider having the dog walker use their own leash.

8. I need to take my pet to the veterinarian. How do I maintain social distancing?

Your vet may have adjusted their operations to ensure social distancing. In some cases, they may need to cancel or modify procedures and appointments. For example, they may have you wait outside the clinic, see your animal in the car, or even have a telemedicine appointment. You must wear a facial covering when interacting with veterinary staff. Many challenges are facing all medical professions. Call your veterinarian in advance and work with them closely to determine the best way to protect their health, your health, and the health of your animal. If you are sick and your pet needs to see a veterinarian, try to arrange for someone else to take your pet in and alert the facility before your pet arrives so they can prepare.

There are simple steps you can take to protect the health of your pet and family from most diseases:

- Establish a relationship with a veterinarian for your pet.
- Keep your pet's vaccinations current and use flea and tick control.
- Wash your hands after handling your pet, its bedding and toys, or bowls.
- If you are sick, keep your distance from other people and pets and wash your hands frequently.
- If your pet is sick, contact a veterinarian. Keep it away from other pets until it is better. Wash your hands each time after caring for it.