

Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)

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 different 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 new coronavirus known as SARS-CoV-2 which causes the disease known as COVID-19 in humans.

3. How does COVID-19 spread?

Like other respiratory illnesses, such as influenza, human coronaviruses most commonly spread from human to human through:

- Droplets produced through coughing and sneezing
- Close personal contact, such as caring for an infected person
- Touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes before washing your hands

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

To date, there are no reports of pets becoming sick with COVID-19 or of them spreading it to people or other pets. In Hong Kong there have been two separate reported cases of dogs testing positive for COVID-19 after being in contact with an owner who had also tested positive for COVID-19. Signs of illness were not reported in either dog. One dog was released from quarantine after testing negative for COVID-19 and the other dog is still under quarantine. At this time, there is no evidence that pets, including dogs, can spread COVID-19.

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. Have a two-week supply of pet food and pet medicines available.



Key Messages:

There is no evidence that pets can become sick with or spread COVID-19.

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

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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 if you have one.

7. 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. 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 properly.

8. What else should I do?

There are basic 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.