



COVID-19: FAQs FOR ANIMAL OWNERS

Updated as of July 7, 2020

What are coronaviruses?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses. Some strains affect animals, while others affect people. The majority of coronaviruses stick to their own species.

Can animals become ill with COVID-19?

The first case of an animal testing positive for SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19) in the United States was a tiger at a zoo in New York City. The CDC and USDA have since confirmed a small number of pets worldwide, including cats and dogs, have been reported to be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19, mostly after close contact with people with COVID-19.

It appears that the virus that causes COVID-19 can spread from people to animals in some situations. Based on the limited information available to date, the risk of animals spreading COVID-19 to people is considered to be low. Further studies are needed to understand if and how different animals could be affected by COVID-19.

Please see the [CDC Animals and Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/animals.html\)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/animals.html) webpage for additional information.

Should my animal be tested for COVID-19?

At this time, routine animal testing for COVID-19 is not recommended by the CDC, the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) or the Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC).

If your pet is showing signs of a respiratory infection, consult with your veterinarian so they can assess the animal for common respiratory illnesses before looking into possible SARS-CoV-2 infection.

Can pets spread COVID-19?

Based on the limited information available to date, the risk of animals spreading COVID-19 to people is considered to be low. At this time, there is no evidence that the virus that causes COVID-19 can spread to people from the skin or fur of pets. COVID-19 appears to be primarily transmitted by contact with an infected person's bodily secretions, such as saliva or mucus droplets in a cough or sneeze.

Although the CDC is certain bacteria and fungi can be carried on fur and hair, there is no evidence that viruses, including the virus that causes COVID-19, can spread to people from the skin, fur, or hair of pets. However, because animals can sometimes carry other germs that can make people sick, it's always a good idea to practice healthy habits around pets and other animals, including washing hands before and after interacting with them.

Can I bring my animal into the veterinarian for care?

If you are healthy and your pet needs to see a veterinarian, please call before bringing them in to the vet. Veterinary clinics are taking precautions and may have a special operating procedure that you will be asked to follow.

If you are sick with COVID-19 or another communicable disease, you should stay at home, minimizing contact with other people, until you are well. Accordingly, if it is a non-urgent appointment for your pet or service animal consider rescheduling the appointment until your physician and/or your public health official believes you no longer present a risk of transmitting your infection to other people you may encounter during such a visit, including owners of pets or other animals and veterinary clinic staff.

Can I have contact with my animal if I am ill with COVID-19?

If you are sick with COVID-19 (either suspected or confirmed by a test), restrict contact with your pets and other animals, just like you would with other people.

- When possible, have another member of your household care for your pets while you are sick.
- Avoid contact with your pet, including petting, snuggling, being kissed or licked, and sharing food or a bed with them.
- If you must care for your pet or be around animals while you are sick, wear a face covering and wash your hands before and after you interact with them.



What should I do to prepare for my animal's care if I am hospitalized for COVID-19?

Identify another person in your household or community who is willing and able to care for your pet. Make sure you have an emergency kit prepared, with at least two weeks' worth of your pet's food and any needed medications.

Does the animal coronavirus vaccine protect pets or livestock from COVID-19?

While there are livestock and companion animal coronavirus vaccines available, animal owners should be aware these vaccines provide protection against other specific coronaviruses and not the virus causing COVID-19.

Can the animal coronavirus vaccine protect me from getting COVID-19?

The livestock and companion animal coronavirus vaccines are not approved for use in people. These vaccines are intended for use in animals only and do not protect against COVID-19.

Are there any livestock movement restrictions?

There are currently no movement restrictions on livestock in the U.S. related to COVID-19. If you live in an area impacted by a local stay-at-home order and want some extra reassurance in the event you're questioned, you can print and carry the letter from the Texas Department of Agriculture (https://www.texasagriculture.gov/Portals/0/forms/COMM/Essential_Worker_Travel_Form_04.17.2020.pdf).

Are livestock markets open?

Livestock markets are open and continue to operate across the U.S. and Texas. Please contact your local market if you have questions. Please note, livestock markets are working with their state and local public health officials to implement appropriate measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Is there guidance for participating in rodeos, fairs, stock shows, exhibitions, auctions, or other events?

At this time, state, county, and local jurisdictions may have requirements or restrictions for mass gatherings and such events. The TAHC advises you to adhere to the guidance provided by your jurisdiction.

Please note, the TAHC does not have any restrictions for livestock and poultry participating in rodeos, stock shows, or other events as it relates to COVID-19. However, when and if you are attending an authorized event, please adhere to the CDC's human health guidance and contact the event organizer for any additional requirements.

Resources

CDC: Animals and Coronavirus Disease 2019 (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/animals.html>)

American Veterinary Medical Association: COVID-19 (<https://www.avma.org/resources-tools/animal-health-and-welfare/covid-19>)

Texas Veterinary Medical Association: COVID-19 Resources (<https://www.tvma.org/Resources/COVID-19-Resources>)

