COVID-19: FAQs FOR ANIMAL OWNERS

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. COVID-19 has not been proven to circulate between people and animals.

Can animals become ill with or spread COVID-19?

There is no evidence at this time that animals can become ill with COVID-19 or that they can spread it to other animals or people. To date, the CDC has not received any reports of pets or other animals becoming sick with COVID-19 in the United States.

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

Can pets serve as fomites in the spread of COVID-19?

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.

COVID-19 might be able to be transmitted by touching a contaminated surface or object (i.e., a fomite) and then touching the mouth, nose, or possibly eyes, but this appears to be a secondary route. Smooth (non-porous) surfaces (e.g., countertops, door knobs) transmit viruses better than porous materials (e.g., paper money, pet fur), because porous, and especially fibrous, materials absorb and trap the pathogen (virus), making it harder to contract through simple touch.

Because your pet's hair is porous and also fibrous, it is very unlikely that you would contract COVID-19 by petting or playing with your pet. However, because animals can spread other diseases to people and people can also spread diseases to animals, it's always a good idea to wash your hands before and after interacting with animals; ensure your pet is kept well- groomed; and regularly clean your pet's food and water bowls, bedding material, and toys.

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?

You should restrict contact with pets and other animals while you are sick with COVID-19, just like you would around other people. Although there have not been reports of pets or other animals becoming sick with COVID-19, it is still recommended that people sick with COVID-19 limit contact with animals until more information is known about the new coronavirus.

When possible, have another member of your household care for your animals while you are sick. If you are sick with COVID-19, avoid contact with your pet, including petting, snuggling, being kissed or licked, and sharing food.

If you are the only caretaker for your animal or you have a service dog; do not kiss, hug or have "face-to-face" contact with them. When in contact with your animal's items (toys, food dishes, etc.) always wash your hands with soap and water before and after handling.

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.

Can my animals be vaccinated for COVID-19?

There is no evidence at this time that animals can become ill with COVID-19 or that they can spread it to other animals or people.

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.

Should my animal be tested for COVID-19?

At this time, general animal testing for COVID-19 is not recommended by the CDC or Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) since there is currently no evidence that animals can become sick with COVID-19.

If your pet is showing signs of a respiratory infection, consult with your veterinarian so they can asses the animal for common respiratory illnesses.

Are there any livestock movement restrictions?

There are currently no movement restrictions on livestock in the U.S. related to COVID-19.

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.

Resources

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

American Veterinary Medical Association: COVID-19 (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)