

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 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 person to person 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 in February, one dog tested positive for COVID-19 on multiple tests after being in contact with its owner who had also tested positive for COVID-19. The dog has not had any signs of illness and continues to be quarantined for further testing. 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. Also, please notify your public health point of contact that you have animals in your home.

7. What precautions should be taken for animals that have recently been imported (for example, by shelters, rescue groups or as personal pets) from China?

Animals imported from China will need to meet CDC and USDA requirements for entering the United States. As with any animal introduced to a new environment, animals recently imported from China should be observed daily for signs of illness. If an animal becomes ill, the animal should be examined by a veterinarian. Call your local veterinary clinic before bringing the animal into the clinic and let them know that the animal was recently in China.

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.



Marcia Mayeda, Director

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Updated FAQ on COVID-19 and Pets

1. **With the new findings regarding the tigers in the Bronx Zoo, are there any new recommendations for pet owners to do differently to stay safe?**
 - a. No. Treat your pets as you would another member of your family. If you are feeling sick, you need to keep them away. Lead agencies like the CDC (Center for Disease Control), WHO (World Health Organization), AVMA (American Veterinary Medical Association), and USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) agree that there is no evidence that pets can spread COVID-19.
 - b. The recommendations stay the same:
 - i. If you are sick or tested positive, restrict contact with your pet as you would with another person. If possible have another family member or a friend to feed and care for your pet while you are healing.
 - ii. If you are not sick, pet owners should always practice good hygiene by washing their hands before and after handling their pets. Do not let your pet lick your face and hands, kiss them on the face or share food with them.
 - iii. For owners of service animals, wear a face mask/covering and avoid hugging & kissing your pet.
 - iv. Everyone with pets are advised to observe physical distance of your pet from other pets from a different household and washing your hands before & after handling any animal.
 - v. If you want to be very cautious, don't let other people outside of your household handle your pets at this time—the exception being if your pet needs veterinary care.
2. **Can dogs & cats be infected by COVID-19?**
 - a. In Dogs, it's possible but rare and it does not cause them to get sick
 - i. Two (2) dogs in Hong Kong tested weak positive but neither developed any clinical symptoms. These dogs lived with a COVID-

Agoura ACC
 29525 Agoura Road
 Agoura Hills, CA 91301
 (818) 991-0071

Baldwin Park ACC
 4275 N. Elton Street
 Baldwin Park, CA 91706
 (626) 962-3577

Carson/Gardena ACC
 216 W. Victoria Street
 Gardena, CA 90248
 (310) 523-9566

Castaic ACC
 31044 N. Charlie Canyon Rd.
 Castaic, CA 91384
 (661) 257-3191

Downey ACC
 11258 S. Garfield Ave.
 Downey, CA 90242
 (562) 940-6898

Lancaster ACC
 5210 W. Avenue I
 Lancaster, CA 93536
 (661) 940-4191

Palmdale ACC
 38550 Sierra Highway
 Palmdale, CA 93550
 (661) 575-2888

Administrative Office
 5898 Cherry Avenue
 Long Beach, CA 90805
 (800) 253-3555

19 positive owners and it is believed that these are cases of human-to-animal transmission.

- b. In Cats, they are more easily infected and they seem to get mildly sick.
 - i. A cat in Belgium tested positive for COVID-19 and showed respiratory and digestive symptoms. This cat also lived with a COVID-19 positive owner. The cat fully recovered.
 - ii. A study conducted in China where several cats were experimentally exposed to COVID-19 suggested that cats were susceptible to the virus. Antibodies against SARS-CoV-2 were detected in cats inoculated with the virus and in a third of cats exposed to infected cats.
 - iii. A serologic study of cats living in Wuhan China during the outbreak demonstrated that 15% of the cats had developed an immune response to the virus. Three of the cats were owned by COVID-19 patients, six were seen in veterinary clinics but had no known exposure to the virus and six were stray animals. None of the cats were positive for the virus on PCR tests, indicating they weren't currently infected when tested.
 - iv. The tigers and the lion at the Bronx Zoo also showed some clinical signs which suggests that cats are more susceptible to the virus than dogs.

3. Why are cats more susceptible than dogs?

- a. Studies show that the SARS Cov-2 virus which causes COVID-19 enters the human receptor cells ACE2. Comparative studies show that the cat's ACE2 receptor cells are similar to humans and the dog's ACE2 cells are only about 70% similar.

4. Can COVID-19 be transmitted from pets to their owners?

- a. There is no current evidence indicating that pets can transmit COVID-19 to other pets or humans. However, it is recommended that you keep your pets away from non-household humans and animals as a precaution.
- b. For your veterinary care needs, call your veterinarian first and see if your need can be addressed via telemedicine.

5. Is there testing being done for pets?

- a. IDEXX, a veterinary testing service, has evaluated thousands of canine and feline specimens during validation of its new veterinary test system for the COVID-19 virus and has obtained no positive results. The specimens used for test development and validation were obtained from specimens submitted to IDEXX Reference Laboratories for other animal health PCR

testing needs. While this is good news, we have not reliably tested animals who have had contact with confirmed COVID-19 cases.

6. Should I relinquish my cat to the shelter because of their increased risk for Covid-19?

- a. Absolutely not! An indoor cat poses no risk to you if you keep your household isolated and follow social distancing guidelines. To be safe, keep your cats indoors until the restrictions for stay at home orders have been lifted. If your cat does get infected, it most likely because of a human in the household. There is still no evidence showing cat to human transmission can occur at this time.