

Q&A for Pet Owners Regarding Pets and COVID-19

If animals (especially felines) can contract the virus, can they pass it back to people?

There are very rare instances of pets outside the United States, as well as a tiger at a New York zoo, being infected with COVID-19 after close contact with people who had it.

There is currently no evidence to suggest that pets, livestock, wildlife or zoo animals can spread the COVID-19 virus to people.

Should our cats and dogs be tested for COVID-19?

At this time, COVID-19 tests for animals are not available to the local veterinarian. Routine testing of domestic animals for COVID-19 is not being recommended by the AVMA, CDC, USDA, or the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians (AAVLD).

What should I do if I think my pet has the virus?

Call the animal hospital with any questions about your pet's health.

Let us know if your pet was exposed to a person sick with COVID-19 and if the pet is showing any signs of illness.

Be aware that there are many pathogens and conditions that could cause a pet to have respiratory or gastrointestinal symptoms, and with "stay at home" orders in place, pets may be exposed to increased respiratory irritants such as household cleaners, disinfectants, and even aromatherapy products.

Should people stop interacting with their pets?

No. If you are not ill with COVID-19, you can and should interact with your pets as usual – including feeding, playing, etc. Simply continue to practice good hygiene: wash your hands before and after interacting with pets; keep bedding, toys, bowls, collars, leashes and litter boxes clean; don't allow pets to lick your hands or face.

Who should care for my pets if I become sick with COVID-19?

If you are sick with COVID-19, ideally another member of your household should care for your pets until you are recovered. If that is not possible, keep contact to a minimum and wash your hands thoroughly before and after contact with pets. Protect your pets by not allowing them to lick your hands or face. Develop an emergency plan for your pets' care in case you need to be hospitalized.