Arkansas Department of Health

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COVID-19 Resources for Companion Animal Owners

Key Concepts

What to do if you own pets

- Until we learn more about how this virus affects animals, treat pets as you would other human family members to protect them from a possible infection.
- Because there is a small risk that people with COVID-19 could spread the virus to animals, CDC recommends that pet owners limit their pet's interaction with people outside their household.
  - Keep cats indoors when possible and do not let them roam freely outside.
  - Walk dogs on a leash at least 6 feet (2 meters) away from others.
  - Avoid public places where a large number of people gather.
  - Do not put face coverings on pets. Covering a pet's face could harm them.
- There is no evidence that the virus can spread to people from the skin, fur, or hair of pets. Do not wipe or bathe your pet with chemical disinfectants, alcohol, hydrogen peroxide, or any other products not approved for animal use.
- Talk to your veterinarian if your pet gets sick or if you have any concerns about your pet's health.

What You Need to Know

- 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.
- Based on the limited information available to date, the risk of animals spreading COVID-19 to people is considered to be low.
- It appears that the virus that causes COVID-19 can spread from people to animals in some situations.
- Treat pets as you would other human family members – do not let pets interact with people outside the household.
- If a person inside the household becomes sick, isolate that person from everyone else, including pets.

- This is a rapidly evolving situation and information will be updated as it becomes available.

> **Press Release: Confirmation of COVID-19 in Two Pet Cats in New York**
> https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2020/s0422-covid-19-cats-NYC.html
> **Press Release: Household cat confirmed with virus that causes COVID-19**
> https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/MNBAH/bulletins/28eac81
> **Press Release: Confirmation of COVID-19 in Pet Dog in New York**
> https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/newsroom/stakeholder-info/sa_by_date/sa-2020/sa-06/sars-cov-2-dog

Note: The scientific name of this novel coronavirus is severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). In people, the disease caused by the virus is called Coronavirus Disease 2019, or COVID-19. In the context of animal health, we refer to the disease as SARS-CoV-2.

Further studies are needed to understand if and how different animals could be affected by SARS-CoV-2. Limited information is available to characterize the spectrum of clinical illness associated with SARS-CoV-2 infection in animals. Clinical signs thought to be compatible with SARS-CoV-2 infection in animals include fever, coughing, difficulty breathing or shortness of breath, lethargy, sneezing, nasal/ocular discharge, vomiting, and diarrhea.

Additional Resources:

CDC COVID-19 Pets and Other Animals:

- CDC COVID-19 Pets and Other Animals:
  https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/animals/pets-other-animals.html
- CDC COVID-19 and Animal FAQs:
  https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html?deliveryName=US_1164-DM27551#COVID-19-and-Animals
- FDA Helpful Q&A about COVID-19 and Your Pets:
  https://www.fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/helpful-questions-and-answers-about-coronavirus-covid-19-and-your-pets
- AVMA COVID-19 FAQs for Pet Owners:
  https://www.avma.org/resources-tools/animal-health-and-welfare/covid-19/covid-19-faqs-pet-owners