

## COVID-19 and Animals FAQ

### How should I prepare for coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) if I have a pet?

Take time now to **make plans and prepare your pets** in case you can no longer take care of your pets or have to go to the hospital due to COVID-19. For a downloadable guide you can complete to help with emergency planning for pets, visit [nyc.gov](https://nyc.gov) and search for **pets and service animals**.

#### **Make a Plan — Prepare for a Human Health Emergency:**

- Designate a trusted pet caregiver (family, friend, neighbor, colleague). Your identified caregiver should have a set of your house keys, be familiar with your home and pet, know your emergency plan, and have your contact information.
- Record important information about your pet so that you can easily access it during an emergency.
- Put together a Go Bag for each pet with basic food, supplies, medicine, identification, a list of emergency contacts, your veterinarian's contact information and vaccination proof.
- Keep a collar/harness, leash and your animal's Go Bag in a place where it can be easily found.
- Have crates, food, extra litter and other supplies on hand for quick movement of pets.
- If you have neighbors who need help, offer to foster or walk their dog.
- Update animal vaccines (Rabies, Bordetella) in the event boarding becomes necessary.
- If your pet is on medication, ask your veterinarian for an extra supply.
- Make sure all medications are documented with dosages and administering instructions.
- If you do not have a yard, be sure to have extra cleaning products and newspaper or puppy pads on hand if you cannot leave your home to walk your dog.

#### **Ensure Proper Identification:**

- Dogs and cats should wear a collar or harness, rabies tag, and identification tag at all times. Identification tags should include your name, address and phone number, and the phone number of an emergency contact.
- Make sure your pet's microchip is registered and up to date.

#### **Veterinary Care:**

- Many veterinary clinics and hospitals have adjusted their practices to reflect social distancing guidance related to COVID-19. If your pet needs care, first **call your veterinarian to determine how to proceed**.

### **Can I get COVID-19 from my pet?**

Currently, there is no evidence that companion animals, including pets, are contributing to the COVID-19 pandemic; the virus that causes COVID-19 appears to be transmitted exclusively from person to person. Cats and dogs can be infected, and there are a few reports of cats and dogs becoming sick. However, at this time there are no reports of companion animals spreading COVID-19 to people.

### **Can a pet's fur spread the virus that causes COVID-19?**

There are no reports that viruses which may cause respiratory disease, including COVID-19, can be spread from a pet's fur.

### **I am sick with COVID-19 and have a pet. What should I do?**

There is currently no evidence that pets can transmit COVID-19. However, given the limited reports of people spreading COVID-19 to their pet, it is best to limit contact with your pets if you are sick. Maintain separation from your pets as you would other household members. If possible, have another member of your household or someone else you trust care for your animals while you are sick. If you must care for your pet or be around animals while you are sick, wash your hands before and after you interact with them. Refrain from hugging, kissing and sharing food with pets; coughing or sneezing on your pets; and allowing animals from different households to mingle. Wash pet bedding, leashes, collars, dishes and toys the same way you would clean other surfaces in your home. For more information, visit [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) and search for **if you have animals**.

If you are under quarantine orders and you need assistance caring for your companion animal because you are at a hotel or you are quarantining in your home and cannot leave to walk your dog, you may contact your Test & Trace monitor or resource navigator for a pet care referral.

### **Can people give this virus to animals and, if so, what animals are at risk?**

We are still learning about this new coronavirus and how it spreads. There have been reports in the United States of people with COVID-19 spreading it to animals including tigers and lions at the Bronx Zoo and two pet cats from different households. Further studies are needed to understand if and how different animals could be affected by COVID-19.

Keep your cats indoors whenever possible to prevent them from interacting with other animals and people. Also, do not let your pets interact with people or animals outside of your household.

### **What should I do if I think my animal has the virus?**

Call your veterinary clinic with any questions about your animal's health. In order to ensure the veterinary clinic is prepared for the household animal, the guardian should call ahead and arrange the hospital or clinic visit. If you are sick, do not take your animal to the veterinarian yourself. Make sure your veterinarian knows if your animal was exposed to a person sick with COVID-19 and if your animal is showing any signs of illness. Veterinarians who believe an animal should be tested will contact state animal health

officials, who will work with public and animal health authorities to decide whether samples should be collected and tested.

### **Are veterinarians and pet supply stores open for business?**

Essential veterinary care, pet food retail, and animal shelter operations are all deemed essential services in New York State, and are therefore exempt from the “PAUSE” Executive Order. For more information on exempt animal operations, visit [agriculture.ny.gov](http://agriculture.ny.gov) and search for **Interim Guidance for Animal Care Operations**

### **How can I best practice social (physical) distancing with a pet?**

When walking your dog, keep at least 6 feet between you and others. Also remember that in NYC it is the law that your dog must be on a leash no longer than 6 feet. Once home, practice good hand hygiene and wash your hands with soap and water. Follow the general Health Department guidelines on wearing a face covering when you are out in the community while walking the dog. Even people who don't feel sick or show symptoms can spread the virus.

### **Can I still adopt or foster an animal from an animal shelter?**

Yes. There is no evidence that any companion animals, including shelter animals, are a potential source of COVID-19. Many animal shelters and rescues continue to look for foster care and adoption applicants. For more information about Animal Care Centers of NYC's updated operations and adoption/fostering policies, visit [nycacc.org/help](http://nycacc.org/help).

For general information on COVID-19, including how to guard against stigma, visit [nyc.gov/coronavirus](http://nyc.gov/coronavirus) or [cdc.gov/covid19](http://cdc.gov/covid19). For real-time updates, text “COVID” to 692-692. Message and data rates may apply.

**The NYC Health Department may change recommendations as the situation evolves.**

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