

# Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) and Pets



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At the Animal Medical Center, we're closely monitoring the current COVID-19 outbreak and what it means for our companion animals. We will update this page with relevant information as it becomes available, however, we recommend checking trusted government agencies for the latest updates.

## Recommended Sources and Articles:

- [Centers for Disease Control](#)
- [World Health Organization](#)
- [New York Times | Coronavirus and Your Dog: No Need to Panic Yet](#)

# Can COVID-19 infect companion animals?

**Short Answer: It's unclear.**

A dog in Hong Kong tested "weak positive" for COVID-19, suggesting that human-to-animal transmission might be possible. However, there is still a lot that's unknown, and the lack of other positive results in companion animals makes it hard for researchers to answer this question definitively.

So far, the dog in Hong Kong has shown no clinical signs of infection. The dog's owner had previously tested positive for COVID-19, and it's believed the dog's virus came from the owner. At this time, it's unclear whether the dog can spread the disease or if transmission stops with the dog.

As a precaution with any infectious disease, infected humans should isolate themselves from their pets as they would with any other family member and follow the hygiene and preventive measures described below.

# Can COVID-19 be transmitted by companion animals?

**Short Answer: It's highly unlikely.**

At this point, there is no evidence that COVID-19 can spread from an infected companion animal to a human. However, the virus is thought to spread by contact with contaminated surfaces (which can include your pet's fur/nose/tongue), so please follow the hygiene and preventive measures described below.

# How can I protect my pet?

Since there's no vaccine for the new coronavirus, preventive steps and preparation are the best ways to protect yourself and your pet.

## **Practice good hygiene to stay healthy**

- Wash your hands often with soap and water. Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds and be sure to get the back of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
- Wash your hands after touching or playing with your pets. While there is no evidence at this time that pets can spread the coronavirus, washing hands after interacting with animals is always a good idea.
- When you don't have access to soap and water, use a hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick and stay home when you aren't feeling well.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue and then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect objects and surfaces you touch often.

## **Create an emergency plan for your pet**

- Have a two-week supply of your pet's food on hand in case you're not able to get to the store.
- Create a list of the medications your pet takes, including dosages and administration instructions. Make sure you have enough medication for at least two weeks.
- Identify a trusted relative, friend, or sitter who will help care for your pet if you become ill and cannot care for your pet for a period of time.
- Make sure your pet is microchipped and wearing up-to-date identification tag.

## **If you contract COVID-19**

- Restrict contact with your pet, just as you would other people.
- Avoid direct contact with pets, including petting, snuggling, being kissed or licked, and sharing food.
- Avoid sneezing or coughing on or near your pet.
- If you must care for your pet while you are sick, wash your hands before and after you interact and wear a face mask.