

## Veterinary Facilities and COVID-19

### What do we know about COVID-19 and domestic animals?

- To date, there is no evidence that domestic animals can become ill with the virus that causes COVID-19, or spread it to people. However, we are still learning about this virus.
- Transmission of COVID-19 is much more likely to occur from infected people, rather than animals. Soft surfaces, such as fur or hair, don't transfer viruses as well as hard surfaces.

### How can veterinary facilities maintain social distancing with clients?

- Consider the workflow at your facility to create methods to maintain social distancing. Possible ideas include:
  - Curbside medicine: the building is closed to clients who remain in their cars while pets are taken in and out by staff, and discussions about care are conducted over the phone
  - Consider telemedicine appointments for established clients with valid veterinarian-client-patient-relationships, when medically appropriate
  - Using temporary measures to mark out 6 foot distances to follow CDC guidelines on [How to Protect Yourself \(https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/prevention.html\)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/prevention.html) in the lobby or exam rooms

### How should veterinary facilities handle animals during the COVID-19 outbreak?

- If an animal is healthy or is presenting for non-respiratory illness, staff should wear gloves when handling patients, reduce patient contact to only what is necessary, and practice excellent hand hygiene before and after handling patients.
- Though we don't currently think that animals can become ill with COVID-19, if an animal has signs of a respiratory infection, particularly from a household with a COVID-19 infected person, staff should follow the above guidelines, plus wear eye protection (goggles or face shield), a facemask, and a gown or labcoat. Clean and disinfect the exam room thoroughly. After typical respiratory pathogens have been ruled out, testing for the virus that causes COVID-19 could be considered.

### How should rooms or treatment areas be cleaned and disinfected?

- Standard cleaning and disinfection protocols will kill the virus that causes COVID-19. Be sure to follow the correct contact time and dilution instructions for the products you use. Focus additional disinfection on high contact and high touch surfaces such as phones, doorknobs, keyboards, and equipment.

## What if a client has COVID-19 and their animal requires veterinary care?

- If client informs you they have tested positive for COVID-19, recommend that a healthy person bring in the animal for them. If that is not possible, have the client stay in their car, and send a staff member with appropriate personal protective equipment (eye and respiratory protection, gloves, and gown or labcoat) to bring the pet into the clinic.

## Do I need to notify the State Public Health Veterinarian if I see a pet from a household where someone is ill with COVID-19?

No, you do not need to let the SPHV know about each of these instances. However, we are available if you have questions.

## What if one of my employees becomes ill with COVID-19?

- Veterinary personnel should not work while ill, whether it is COVID-19 or another illness.
- At this time, contacts of people who test positive for COVID-19 are being assessed for their risk and recommendations are made to reduce potential spread. Your clinic may be contacted by MDH in this situation.

## Latest Updates and Additional Resources

The COVID-19 situation is changing rapidly and this guidance may be updated as needed.

- Situation updates from MDH [Situation Update for Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/situation.html\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/situation.html) webpage and CDC [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) \(www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html\)](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html) webpage.
- Minnesota Board of Animal Health [Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) \(www.bah.state.mn.us/covid-19/\)](http://www.bah.state.mn.us/covid-19/)
- [Minnesota Board of Veterinary Medicine \(mn.gov/boards/veterinary-medicine/\)](http://mn.gov/boards/veterinary-medicine/)
- [Compendium of Veterinary Standard Precautions for Disease Prevention in Veterinary Personnel \(nasphv.org/Documents/VeterinaryStandardPrecautions.pdf\)](http://nasphv.org/Documents/VeterinaryStandardPrecautions.pdf), published by the National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians includes infection control plan templates and disinfectant guidelines
- [American Veterinary Medical Association: COVID-19 \(www.avma.org/resources-tools/animal-health-and-welfare/covid-19\)](http://www.avma.org/resources-tools/animal-health-and-welfare/covid-19), with additional suggestions for modifying clinic traffic
- [CDC: Animals and Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) \(www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/animals.html\)](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/animals.html)

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03/17/2020

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