

COVID-19 AND PETS / ANIMALS

Key Points

- Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses. Some cause illness in people, and others cause illness in certain types of animals.
- Some coronaviruses that infect animals can sometimes be spread to people, but this is rare.
- The first case of an animal testing positive for the virus in the United States was a tiger that had a respiratory illness at a zoo in New York City.
- We do not have evidence that companion animals, including pets, can spread the virus that causes COVID-19 to people or that they might be a source of infection in the United States.
- Further studies are needed to understand if and how different animals could be affected by the virus that causes COVID-19 as well as how this might affect human health.



Figure 1 Domestic pets

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 potential infection.

- Do not let pets interact with people or other animals outside the household.
- Keep cats indoors when possible to prevent them from interacting with other animals or people.
- Walk dogs on a leash, maintaining at least 6 feet (2 meters) from other people and animals.
- Avoid dog parks or public places where a large number of people and dogs gather.

Stay healthy around animals

In the United States, there is no evidence to suggest that any animals, including pets, livestock, or wildlife, might be a source of COVID-19 infection at this time. However, because all animals can carry germs that can make people sick, it's always a good idea to practice healthy habits around pets and other animals.



Figure 2 Livestock

- Wash your hands after handling animals, their food, waste, or supplies
- Practice good pet hygiene and clean up after pets properly.
- Talk to your veterinarian if you have questions about your pet's health.
- Be aware that children 5 years of age and younger, people with weakened immune systems, and people 65 years of age and older are more likely to get sick from germs some animals can carry.



Figure 3 Wildlife