

CORONAVIRUS & PETS: Client Handout

The human coronavirus (COVID-19) is in the news a lot these days, and some reports are based on fact, others speculation. We don't have all the answers, but as a pet owner – or someone who spends a lot of time around pets – here's what you should know:

- **Follow current COVID-19 health official recommendations** from the World Health Organization (WHO) and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC).
- Based on what we know now, and what is known about other coronaviruses, **there is no evidence that dogs or cats in a domestic environment can be a source of COVID-19 infection to humans or other animals—and limited evidence to support risk of the virus to pets.**
- However, **any surface with which a person infected with COVID-19 comes into contact may transfer the virus** or viral RNA, including pet fur or nasal secretions. As such, it is advised to keep pets away from infected people, and to confine pets of infected people.
- **Always follow good handwashing and hygiene practices, especially before and after interacting with pets.** Avoid contact with wildlife, including those kept as pets. Routinely clean and disinfect animal contact surfaces like cages and feeding areas, as well as immediately after contact with high-risk animals, such as wildlife and stray or free-roaming dogs and cats.
- **If your pet shows signs of respiratory illness (coughing, sneezing, lethargy or otherwise), call your veterinarian at the first sign of illness,** and keep them isolated from other pets as a precautionary measure. Signs of illness in dogs and cats are usually associated with various viral and bacterial infections (kennel cough, canine flu, etc.) that are neither coronaviruses nor transmissible to people.
- At this time, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC), U.S. Dept. of Agriculture (USDA), American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) and other **human and veterinary health organizations do not recommend routine testing of pets for SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19 in humans.**
- **Stay apprised of the latest information from reputable sources such as:**
 - World Small Animal Veterinary Association: [Coronavirus & Companion Animals Advice](#)
 - World Organization for Animal Health (OIE): [Questions and Answers on the 2019 Coronavirus Disease \(COVID-19\)](#)
 - U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): [About Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)