

COVID-19 and your pet: information for pet owners in BC

1. Can my pet get sick with COVID-19?

There is currently no evidence that domestic animals, including dogs and cats, can become sick with this new coronavirus. A pet dog in Hong Kong recently tested positive for the virus but did not show any signs of illness. This animal was from a household with a person infected with COVID-19. This situation is being monitored very closely and any new information on the ability of the virus to cause illness in pets and any other domestic animals will be updated as it becomes available.

2. Can pets infect people with the COVID-19 virus?

It is unlikely. There is no evidence that pets or other domestic animals can spread the virus that causes COVID-19 to people. The virus that causes COVID-19 most likely originated from an animal source in China, however, it is now spreading from person-to-person when there is direct contact (through droplets from coughing and sneezing or through direct contact with the virus on hands or surfaces) and not from contact with animals.

3. How can I protect my pet if I am infected with COVID-19?

Individuals infected with COVID-19 should limit contact with their pet during their illness. If an infected person must care for animals, then they should wash their hands before and after interacting with their animals, their food and supplies; and their animals should not be exposed to other people.

4. What should I do if my pet becomes ill and was around a person with COVID-19?

Currently, there is no evidence that pets or other animals can become ill after exposure to the virus that causes COVID-19. However, if your pet becomes ill after exposure to a person with COVID-19, and you need to take your pet to a veterinary clinic, call your veterinarian and let them know that your sick pet was exposed to a person with COVID-19. Your veterinarian will discuss with you how to manage the situation.

5. Is there a vaccination against the COVID-19 that my pet can receive?

No. Currently, there are no vaccines against COVID-19 available for animals. There is absolutely no evidence that vaccinating dogs with commercially available vaccines for other coronaviruses will provide cross-protection against COVID-19.



6. Am I at risk of getting COVID-19 from imported animals? (e.g. a dog imported by a rescue organization)?

There is no evidence that imported pets or other domestic animals can spread the virus. This situation is being monitored very closely and any new information on the risk from imported animals will be updated as it becomes available. However, until we know more, importers, rescue organizations and adoptive families should avoid importing animals from areas where COVID-19 is circulating. If animals are imported from affected areas, they should be closely monitored for signs of illness. If your pet has been imported from an affected area and becomes sick, contact your veterinarian and inform them of the situation. Call ahead to ensure they are aware of the circumstances before taking your pet to a veterinary clinic. The most affected countries are listed by the Public Health Agency of Canada here: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/health-professionals/covid-19-affected-areas-list.html>

7. How can I protect my family (human and pet) from COVID-19?

Follow the same advice that public health officials recommend for the cold and flu season:

- wash your hands often with soap and water,
- cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing,
- avoid others who are unwell, and
- stay home when you are sick.

The most important thing you can do to prevent coronavirus and other illnesses is to wash your hands regularly and avoid touching your face. Cover your mouth when you cough so you're not exposing other people. If you are sick yourself, stay away from others. **If you are ill and have been in an area where there is COVID-19 transmission, contact your health care provider and 8-1-1 for advice.** See: [http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/coronavirus-\(novel\)](http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/coronavirus-(novel))