

ANIMALS AND PETS

Overview

This document provides information on the risk of COVID-19 for pets, livestock and other animals. This document and the guidance within it is subject to change and will be updated as needed. Current information related to COVID-19 can be found at: <https://www.alberta.ca/covid-19-information.aspx>

COVID-19 Information and Risk Mitigation

Risk of infection for pets and farm animals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There have been a few reports of dogs and cats testing positive for COVID-19. Generally, this occurs after the animal has been exposed to an infected person in the household.• It is not clear how often infection happens and under what circumstances. A small number of laboratory studies indicate that cats, ferrets, and hamsters are susceptible and, to a lesser degree, dogs.• A small number of studies suggest pigs, chickens and ducks are not susceptible to the virus that causes COVID-19.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Mink, which are related to ferrets, are susceptible and human-to-mink transmission has occurred on farms in the Netherlands.○ The susceptibility of other livestock species is currently uncertain, but appears to be low.
Caring for an animal during isolation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If possible, have another person care for your animals. For animals in your home, this should be another member of your household or cohort family.• If you are in isolation and must provide care for animals, always practice good hygiene including:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Avoid close contact with animals○ Avoid coughing or sneezing on your animals○ Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands○ Wash your hands often, including before and after touching animals, their food and supplies○ Put on clean clothes before providing care for animals outside your home.○ Keep pets home and keep cats indoors if possible○ Ensure pets do not come into close contact with other people or animals outside your household or cohort family
Veterinary services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Veterinary practices have implemented precautions and alternate methods of service delivery to protect public health. These include:

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ providing consultations by electronic means when appropriate○ maintaining social distancing as much as possible when a client visits a veterinary practice or drops an animal off for assessment or care● When you call your veterinarian, ask about the specific options being used and, in the event your pet is required to go to the clinic, about the social distancing protocol on-site.● Inform your veterinarian if you or a member of your household is in isolation or quarantine due to COVID-19.
COVID-19 testing for animals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Testing animals for the virus that causes COVID-19 is generally not recommended, as the virus is mainly spread from person-to-person and not through animal contact.● If your animal develops illness following exposure to a COVID-19 case or person with COVID-19 symptoms, call your veterinarian so they can:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ assess the situation and determine if your animal needs to be seen○ help determine if your animal has another more common disease or condition● There may be some exceptional circumstances that warrant testing. Veterinarians should contact the Office of the Chief Provincial Veterinarian in advance to discuss whether to proceed with testing.
Shelter adoption	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● There have been no reports of transmission of the virus from a companion animal to a person, and the risk of animals spreading COVID-19 to people is considered to be low.● There is no reason to think that animals, including shelter pets, play a significant role in spreading the virus that causes COVID-19.● You may wish to talk to the organization from which you will be adopting about the steps they are taking to minimize any potential for exposure of animals in their care and for social distancing at the time of pick-up.
Moving into a continuing care facility with a pet	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Best practices and the limited available evidence support keeping pets, especially cats, in your own room as much as possible, unless taking them outside, and avoiding close contact between your pet and others for 14 days after you move.● The most important factor to consider is whether you or others in your household may have been exposed to COVID-19, as this is the most likely source of infection for a pet.