

# COVID-19: Advice for animal owners

*There is currently no evidence that animals play a role in the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus or that animals become sick. However, there are still things animal owners can do to care for themselves and their animals.*

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that can cause illness in animals or humans. Only some of these can be transmitted from animals to humans.

The COVID-19 virus is a new type of coronavirus that causes an infection in people, including a severe respiratory illness.

COVID-19 spreads through close contact with an infected person; mostly face-to-face or within a household. It cannot jump across a room or be carried for long distances in the air. There is no evidence that domestic or wild animals can spread COVID-19.

COVID-19 has not been reported in domestic animals or wildlife in Australia.

## Advice for animal owners

You should continue to follow general good hygiene and biosecurity practices before and after handling animals, their food or equipment, or after washing food/water bowls.

- Wash hands often with soap and running water, for at least 20 seconds. Dry with paper towel or hand dryer. Try not to touch your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. If you don't have a tissue cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow.

Have a plan about how your animals will be cared for if you cannot look after them, and make sure the person you will be trusting with caring for your animals is willing to take on this responsibility.

Ensure you have sufficient food, litter or any medications your animals may need, just in case you need to self-isolate for a few weeks.

If, as a pet owner, you are isolated to your home and have a secure backyard, this can be used for fresh air and sunshine as well as a place for pets to explore and stretch their legs.

If you are unable to go outdoors, you should consider some dedicated indoor play time with your pets. Provide toys and games for mental enrichment. Games could include fetch, hide the treat and teaching pets new tricks.

If you are ill for any reason, it is a good idea to avoid close contact such as hugging, face-to-face contact, sharing food or sleeping with your pets.

## If you are diagnosed with COVID-19

If you are diagnosed with COVID-19 you MUST follow the direction of health authorities.

DO NOT break your isolation even to take your animal to the vet if they are sick. If your animal becomes sick for any reason, call your veterinarian for advice and to arrange appropriate care.

If you are sick, you should minimise contact with animals and, where possible, you should arrange for someone else to mind your pets and care for livestock.

If you must care for your pet or be around animals while you are in quarantine or sick, you should:

- minimise contact with animals
- wash your hands before and after handling animals
- avoid kissing, being licked by, sharing food or sleeping with your animals
- prevent your animals from interacting with other people.

There is no need to test animals for COVID-19.

## More information

Check the DHHS website for current human health information: [dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus](https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus)

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