

Mobile Veterinarians and COVID-19

What do we know about COVID-19 and domestic animals?

- At this time, there is no evidence that pets play a role in spreading COVID-19 to people. However, there are reports of cats who have tested positive for the virus. Therefore, it is important to isolate ill pets from healthy people and pets when possible, just as ill people should be isolated from healthy people and pets.
- Person to person transmission of COVID-19 is still much more likely to occur than transmission from an animal. Additionally, soft surfaces, such as fur or hair, don't transfer viruses as well as hard surfaces, such as doorknobs and keyboards.

How can mobile veterinarians maintain social distancing and protect themselves?

- Consider telehealth or telemedicine in your veterinary practice for established clients with a valid veterinarian-client-patient relationships.
- If an animal is healthy **and** has no exposure to people with COVID-19 symptoms, use normal precautions but reduce patient contact to only what is necessary, and practice excellent hand hygiene before and after handling patients.
- If an animal is presenting for illness that could be consistent with COVID-19, use more personal protective equipment (PPE), including facemask, eye protection, gloves and a gown or labcoat. Also, reduce patient contact to only what is necessary, and practice excellent hand hygiene before and after handling patients.
- If your client is ill (with COVID-19 or another illness), consider postponing if it's a non-essential appointment. In emergency situations, ask the client to have a healthy person meet you for the appointment, perhaps outside or in another location. Discuss care and follow-up with the client by phone.
- See CDC's [Interim Infection Prevention and Control Guidance for Veterinary Clinics during the COVID-19 Response](#) for more recommendations for mobile or house call veterinarians.

How should my equipment be cleaned and disinfected?

- Standard cleaning and disinfection protocols will kill the virus that causes COVID-19. Be sure to follow the correct contact time and dilution instructions for the products you use. Focus additional disinfection on high-contact and high-touch surfaces.

Should animals be tested for the virus that causes COVID-19?

- Routine testing of animals for the virus that causes COVID-19 is not currently recommended.

- For pets with consistent clinical signs, veterinarians are strongly encouraged to rule out more typical respiratory pathogens first. Testing could be considered for animals with consistent clinical signs who have a history of close contact with person with COVID-19.

What if one of my employees becomes ill with COVID-19?

- Veterinary personnel should not work while ill, whether it is COVID-19 or another illness.
- MDH recommends that if people have symptoms consistent with COVID-19 (fever, cough, shortness of breath, etc.), they should stay home for at least 7 days, and be fever-free for 3 days with improvement of respiratory symptoms before they return to work.
- At this time, contacts of people who test positive for COVID-19 are being assessed for their risk and recommendations are made to reduce potential spread. Your clinic may be contacted by MDH in this situation.

Latest Updates and Additional Resources

The COVID-19 situation is changing rapidly and this guidance may be updated as needed.

- Situation updates from MDH [Situation Update for Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/situation.html\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/situation.html) webpage and CDC [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) \(www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html\)](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html) webpage.
- Minnesota Board of Animal Health [Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) \(www.bah.state.mn.us/covid-19/\)](http://www.bah.state.mn.us/covid-19/)
- [Compendium of Veterinary Standard Precautions for Disease Prevention in Veterinary Personnel \(nasphv.org/Documents/VeterinaryStandardPrecautions.pdf\)](http://nasphv.org/Documents/VeterinaryStandardPrecautions.pdf), published by the National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians includes infection control plan templates and disinfectant guidelines
- [American Veterinary Medical Association: COVID-19 \(www.avma.org/resources-tools/animal-health-and-welfare/covid-19\)](http://www.avma.org/resources-tools/animal-health-and-welfare/covid-19), with additional suggestions for modifying clinic traffic
- CDC [Interim Infection Prevention and Control Guidance for Veterinary Clinics During the COVID-19 Response](https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2020/s0416-covid-19-clinical.html)

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