

A close-up photograph of a small, white, fluffy dog, possibly a Maltese, sitting on a table. A person wearing a blue long-sleeved coat and blue nitrile gloves is using a silver stethoscope to examine the dog's chest. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be a clinical setting. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

# MUST KNOW COVID-19 INFO FOR PET OWNERS

## **NOTE**

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This information is evolving rapidly. We will update this information as we become aware of important changes. We will send update notifications .

## WHAT IS COVID-19?

COVID-19 is the infectious disease caused by the most recently discovered coronavirus. This new virus and disease were unknown before the outbreak began in Wuhan, China, in December 2019.

## CAN SARS-COV-2 INFECT DOGS?

A German Shepherd Dog with respiratory illness has become the first dog in the U.S. confirmed to be infected with SARS-CoV-2. The USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service reported June 2 that the infected dog lived in New York state and was expected to make a full recovery. Another dog in the same home had antibodies against SARS-CoV-2 but no signs of illness.

The dogs live with one owner who developed COVID-19 and another who had clinical signs consistent with the disease.



## CAN SARS-COV-2 INFECT CATS?

As for domestic cats, two cats in Illinois and Minnesota, respectively, were also infected this spring, as confirmed by test results released in early June, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

AVMA information indicates that, by June 1, fewer than 20 pets worldwide had been found to have evidence of SARS-CoV-2 infection and that there had been no reports that pets were sources of infection in people. Reports released since February have included descriptions of infections among dogs in Hong Kong and cats in New York state.

## CAN DOGS AND CATS INFECT HUMANS OR OTHER ANIMALS WITH THE VIRUS?

There is no evidence that cats or dogs can infect humans or other animals with the COVID-19 virus.

## WHAT DO THE ANSWERS ABOVE MEAN FOR ME AND MY PET?

It means that we must exercise caution. It is very unlikely for your pet to become sick or infected from COVID-19, but we still have a lot to learn. If you have flu-like symptoms or think you have been exposed to COVID-19, you should also be distancing yourself from your pet. Otherwise, you can interact with your pet normally.

## WHAT IF I NEED TO VISIT THE VET DURING THIS TIME?

You can start by calling your regular vet first and see if they are scheduling appointments. Currently, most states have deemed vet hospitals as essential businesses or services and are permitted to stay open.

## WILL MY FAMILY VETERINARIAN REMAIN OPEN?

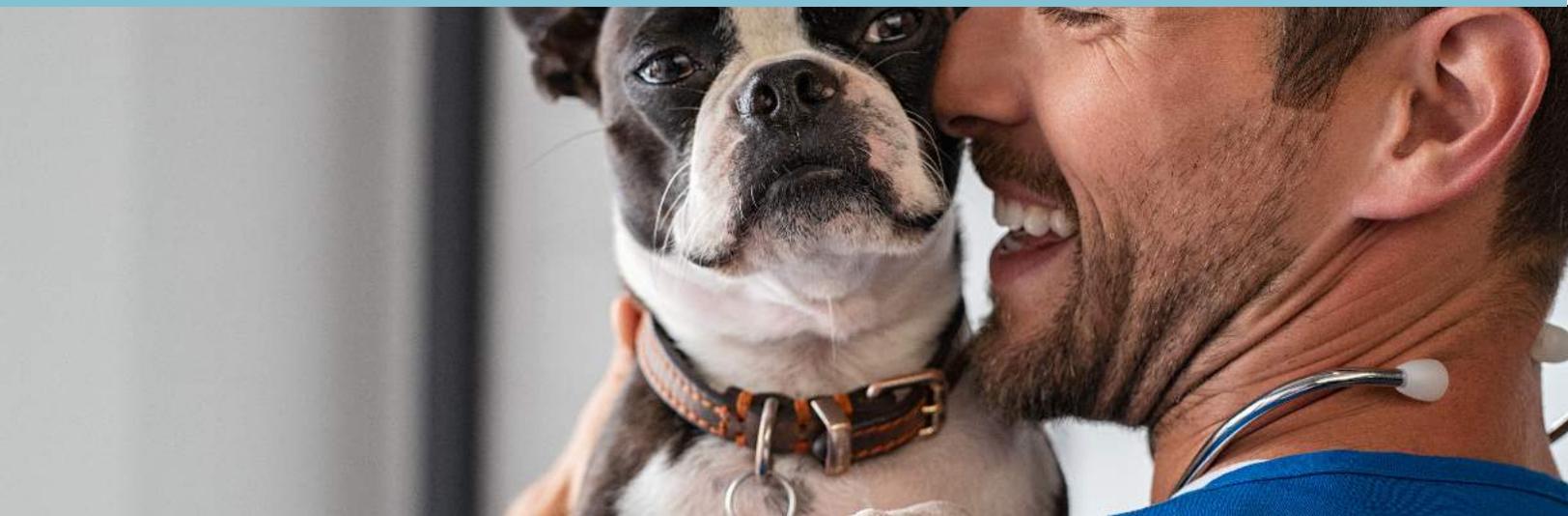
Some general practices remain open as well, regardless of where you are. Veterinary care is an essential service, but some practices are currently safer than others because their COVID-19 policies are stricter.

## SHOULD I AVOID CONTACT WITH ANIMALS, INCLUDING PETS, IF I AM SICK WITH COVID- 19?

You should restrict contact with pets and other animals while you are sick with COVID-19, just like you would restrict contact with other people. Although there have not been reports of pets becoming sick with COVID-19 in the United States, it is still recommended that people sick with COVID-19 limit contact with animals until more information is known about the virus.

Have another member of your household care for your animals, if possible. If you have a service animal or you must care for your animals, then wear a cloth face covering; don't share food, kiss, or hug them; and wash your hands before and after any contact with them. You should not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, or bedding with other people or pets in your home. Cats should also be kept indoors as much as possible.

While we are recommending these as good practices, there is no evidence to suggest that animals, including pets, that may be incidentally infected by humans are playing a role in the spread of COVID-19.



## WHAT ARE SOME OF THE SAFEST COVID-19 POLICIES FOR A VETERINARY PRACTICE IN YOUR OPINION?

- Offer treatment that is needed and cannot wait.
- All leashes, collars and carriers be cleaned with an approved alcohol-based sanitizer prior to the visit.
- No owners should enter the clinic or hospital – animals are dropped off, examined, and owners are called from inside the clinic with a plan for testing and treatment.

## WHAT DO I NEED TO SHELTER IN PLACE WITH MY PET?

**Food and medication.** Have at least a month of your pet's food, medications and supplements. (Even if your family veterinarian is closed, many are still answering phones for refill approvals and other requests.)

**Toiletry essentials.** Remember to stock up on essentials for your pet's eliminations, such as cat litter, doggie bags, and diaper pads.

**A safe method of transport.** Make sure your carriers are clean and accessible, just in case emergency should arise.

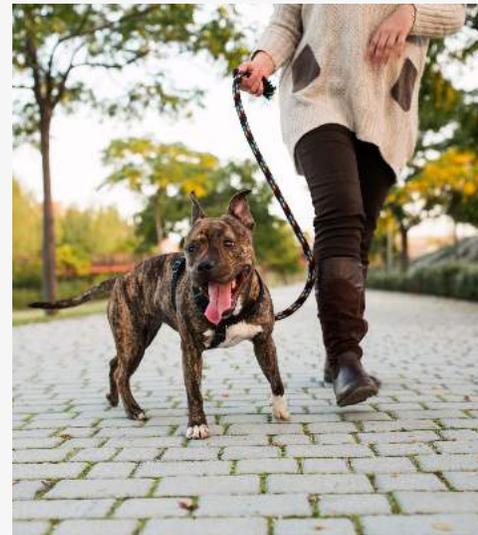
**Water.** Purchase several gallons of water for each pet in your household. Although there is currently no concern for loss of services like running water and electricity, it is always best to be prepared when you are in charge of another life.

## CAN I WALK MY DOG OUTSIDE?

Yes. Just remember to follow social distancing guidelines. You and your pet should stay together and remain at least six feet away from other people outside.

## CAN I GO TO THE DOG PARK?

Use your discretion, but I don't recommend it. It's likely your dog will come closer than six feet away from unfamiliar people, and there is no way of knowing the COVID-19 status of those people.



## WHAT ARE SOME OTHER RESOURCES YOU HAVE FOR ME?

- Up-to-date information from the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA):
- World Health Organization COVID-19 information page:
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention COVID-19 information page:

[Click Here](#)

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## WHAT'S YOUR PERSONAL MESSAGE TO OTHERS DURING THIS TIME?

We thank you for being dedicated pet owners and animal advocates. We urge everyone to stay safe and follow the guidelines of our health experts and officials working so hard to protect our health. We will email you updates on the COVID-19 pandemic as it pertains to dogs and cats in the coming days.