

Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)

1. Can pets become sick with and spread COVID-19?

Animals have tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19 in humans) in the U.S. and other countries, mostly after close contact with people with COVID-19. Most pets have no symptoms or very mild respiratory symptoms and recover without treatment. At this time, the risk of animals spreading COVID-19 to people is considered to be low.

2. How can I protect myself from contracting COVID-19 while at work?

Get vaccinated against COVID-19 to protect yourself from becoming sick and to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Visit the [COVID-19 Vaccine - LA County Department of Public Health](#) website to learn more and myturn.ca.gov to schedule an appointment.

People who are not vaccinated against COVID-19 should wear face masks throughout the shelter and maintain physical distancing when the mask must be removed, such as when eating or drinking.

If you test positive for COVID-19 or have been told by your health care provider that you have COVID-19, you will need to follow [instructions for isolation](#). If you are unvaccinated and have had close contact with an individual with a lab confirmed COVID-19 case, you should stay home from work and follow [quarantine instructions](#).

3. What should I do if I have to interact with a pet or animal who was in close contact with a person with respiratory symptoms?

Although the risk of disease transmission from the fur appears to be low, shelter staff are advised to take the following precautions:

- Wear a mask, gown and gloves. Recommended PPE based on companion animal history can be found [here](#).
- Wash your hands with soap and water before and after each interaction with animals.
- Do not allow pets to lick your face during handling and avoid excessive interaction such as petting, cuddling, handfeeding, and sharing food.

4. What should I do if I have to retrieve the pet from a COVID-19 infected residence?

- If possible, avoid entering the home to prevent person-to-person transmission. The pet should be collected by staff while maintaining at least 6 feet of distance from people living in the home and limiting contact with the environment. Both the animal control worker and



Key Messages:

At this time, the risk of animals spreading COVID-19 to people is considered to be low.

However, pets can spread other diseases to people, so wash your hands before and after handling pets and other animals.

Animal care and control staff should follow standard protocols for handling sick animals or those exposed to disease.

For more information:

**Los Angeles County
Department of Public Health**

Call: 2-1-1

Visit: [COVID-19 Media Page](#) or [Pets and COVID-19](#)

**Centers for Disease Control and
Prevention (CDC)**

Call: 800-CDC-INFO
800-232-4636

Visit: [COVID-19
What You Need to Know About
COVID-19 and Pets](#)

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the resident handing over the animal should wear appropriate facial coverings during this brief interaction. Items such as bowls, leashes and toys should not be removed from the household.

- Wash or disinfect hands (use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol), before and after handling the pet. Back at the shelter, disinfect the truck, wash hands, and change your clothing.
- If collection of the pet involves interacting with people a COVID-19 infected household or being exposed to contaminated environments, the use of PPE and training in its proper use is recommended.

5. What should I do if the pet is impounded at the shelter?

- Wear gloves and gowns/coveralls that can be laundered, and dedicated footwear when handling the pet for intake.
- Wash hands between handling of each animal, after taking off gloves.
- It is not recommended to bathe or apply topical disinfectant to these animals or pets.
- Immediately disinfect surfaces in common use areas where exposed animals have contacted.
- Isolate the pet in a room designated for similarly exposed animals, away from the general population. Exposed animals should be separated by species (e.g., dogs in a separate ward from cats).
- Post signage on the kennel identifying the pet, its exposure and “Do Not Touch”.
- Take the pet outside for elimination/exercise in a dedicated area that can be sanitized but do not allow direct contact with other people and animals.
- Monitor each animal closely for signs of illness and report to the Department of Public Health, Veterinary Public Health Program immediately if you notice signs of illness.
- Designate limited staff that have access to this room for feeding, cleaning, and medical care – to limit how much of the virus could be spread to different parts of the shelter. Staff who are at increased risk of complications from COVID-19 or unvaccinated should avoid contact with these animals. Maintain a log of all staff who have had contact with the animal for occupational health monitoring.
- Follow shelter protocols for standard disinfection of the shelter and vehicles used to transport animals. Clean the designated room last in relation to the entire shelter population.
- Increase sanitation of high-touch areas (handles, desks, leashes, containers, computers).
- Release the pet to the owner as soon as possible. If the exposed pet must be adopted or fostered out, hold it for 14 days from the last known exposure at the shelter first.