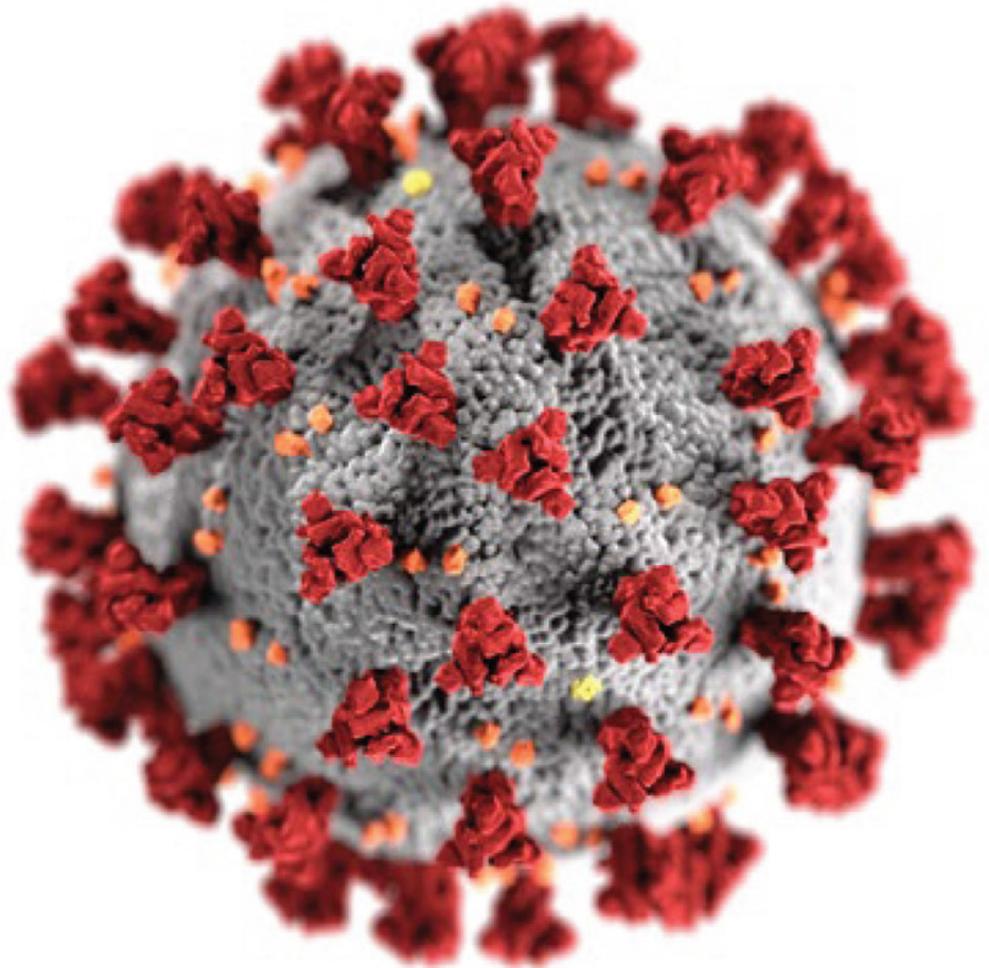




COVID-19

We share your
concerns.

Get the facts from us
on COVID-19 and your
pet's health.



Social Distancing and Your Pet During the COVID-19 Pandemic

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a human respiratory disease that was initially discovered late in 2019. This disease is caused by a new coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2, that has not previously been identified.

Coronaviruses are a family of viruses that cause a variety of diseases. The common cold in humans is caused by a type of coronavirus. Different coronaviruses also cause clinical signs in animals, including diarrhea in dogs and feline infectious peritonitis (FIP) in cats.

It is important to understand, however, that while all coronaviruses are related, they are not the same virus. For example, SARS-CoV-2 cannot cause canine coronavirus infection, and vice versa.



What is social distancing?

Social distancing is one of the most effective strategies available to reduce the spread of COVID-19. When people are in close contact, it is easy for a viral infection to spread between them. When there is more distance between people, it is more difficult for a virus to spread. Social distancing is the act of intentionally creating distance between people, in order to slow the spread of disease.

Social distancing includes the following principles:

- Stay home as much as possible
- Avoid crowds
- Limit errands and social gatherings
- Work from home
- Stay 6 feet (2 meters) away from others when in public

By limiting close personal contact, it becomes more difficult for the virus to spread from person to person. Over time, the goal is that this social distancing will slow the spread of COVID-19.

What are the effects of social distancing on pets?

For the most part, this should be an enjoyable time for your pets. Many of our pets are home alone all day while we are at work or engaged in other activities. During this time of social distancing, you are likely spending more time at home than usual. As long as you are not feeling sick, take advantage of this time to enjoy some extra cuddles and playtime with your pets.

"Fresh air and exercise will likely alleviate some of the stress and anxiety that you may be feeling, while also helping to provide fun and exercise for your dog."

It is healthy to spend time outdoors while social distancing, as long as you are feeling well and can remain at least 6 feet away from other people. Avoid crowded areas like dog parks and busy trails, but quiet neighborhood streets and less-popular trails can give you an excellent opportunity to get outside for a long walk with your dog. Fresh air and exercise will likely alleviate some of the stress and anxiety that you may be feeling, while also helping to provide fun and exercise for your dog.

If you have cats, find new ways to play with them indoors. There are many different types of cat toys available (many of which can be ordered online, allowing you to avoid a shopping trip), but cardboard boxes and balled-up paper that you likely already have at home can also provide a source of entertainment for both you and your cat.

If I have multiple pets, or different types of pets, should I keep them separate?

At this time, there is no evidence that pets can become infected or transmit the virus to another animal, whether that be dog to dog, cat to cat, or between different species of pets (dog to cat for example). Therefore, there is no need to keep pets separated from each other. Taking your pet to a boarding facility or veterinary clinic is also okay, as long as you avoid close contact with employees and other clients.

How do I protect my pets if I get sick?

At this time, there is no evidence to suggest that pets can contract or transmit COVID-19. At the same time, however, this is a new virus and it is not fully understood. For this reason, it is best to limit your contact with your pets if you are sick.

"At this time, there is no evidence to suggest that pets can contract or transmit COVID-19."

If possible, have another family member care for pets while you are ill. This will minimize health risks to both you and your pet. If you must care for your pet yourself, try to minimize contact while doing so. Limit petting and cuddling of your pets and avoid sharing food. Wash your hands thoroughly after handling your pets.

What if my pet needs veterinary care during this period of social distancing?

Many veterinary clinics are adjusting their policies to reflect social distancing guidance related to COVID-19. If your pet needs veterinary care (or if you need to pick up medication, a prescription diet, etc.), call your veterinary hospital first to determine how to proceed. You may be asked whether you have been exposed to anyone with COVID-19 and/or whether you have had any respiratory signs or fever. Based on this information, they will determine the safest way to care for your pet.

Expect that your veterinary visit may look or feel a little different during this time period. Some practices are taking pets to the treatment area for exams and diagnostics, in order to limit the amount of time that team members and clients spend confined in exam rooms together, while other practices are offering curbside service and allowing clients to wait in their cars. Regardless of the approach used during your visit, understand that your veterinarian is doing his or her best to maximize your safety, your pet's safety, and the safety of the veterinary team.

Contributors: Catherine Barnette, DVM

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Tips for Dog Walkers During the COVID-19 Pandemic

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a new respiratory disease in humans, initially discovered late in 2019. This illness is caused by the virus SARS-CoV-2, a novel coronavirus that has not previously been identified.

There are many different coronaviruses, which can cause a wide variety of diseases. In humans, a coronavirus causes the common cold. In young puppies, canine coronavirus can cause diarrhea. Although all coronaviruses are related, they are *not* all the same virus. For example, SARS-CoV-2 cannot cause canine coronavirus infection, and vice versa.



How can people help limit the spread of COVID-19?

At this time, social distancing is one of the most effective methods of reducing the spread of COVID-19. Social distancing is the act of intentionally creating distance between people, in order to slow the spread of disease.

Principles of social distancing include:

- Stay 6 feet (2 meters) away from others when in public
- Avoid crowds
- Limit errands and social gatherings
- Stay home as much as possible
- Work from home if possible

Limiting close personal contact slows the person-to-person spread of COVID-19.

What are the risks to dog walkers during the COVID-19 pandemic?

As more of your clients begin social distancing, you may temporarily find yourself with fewer dog-walking jobs. However, many clients working from home may still want you to provide daily exercise for their dogs. It is important to understand how to do so in a way that is safe for both you and your clients.

As described above, it is important to limit direct contact with your clients. If you interact with them while picking up or dropping off their dog, you should attempt to stand at least 6 feet apart during conversation. People can shed the virus without showing any symptoms of disease, so it is important to practice social distancing even with clients who appear healthy.

"Although we are still learning about the new coronavirus, it appears to remain infectious on some surfaces for several days."

It is also important to limit your contact with potentially contaminated items in your clients' homes, whether they are at home or not. Although we are still learning about the new coronavirus, it appears to remain infectious on some surfaces for several days. If you touch a contaminated surface (like a doorknob) and then touch your face, you could potentially be infected with the virus.

"Although there is no evidence to suggest pets contract or transmit the virus, a pet's fur could be contaminated if an infected owner coughs or sneezes on their pet."

Pets' coats could potentially become contaminated with coronavirus. Although there is no evidence to suggest pets contract or transmit the virus, a pet's fur could be contaminated if an infected owner coughs or sneezes on their pet. Remember, you are not only responsible for protecting your own health, but also the health of your clients. We are all in this together. Even if you are at relatively low risk of serious complications associated with COVID-19, you want to minimize the risk that you could spread the virus to others.

How can dog walkers avoid contracting or spreading disease during the COVID-19

The most important things you can do to minimize your risk of infection, and minimize the risk of transferring infection to your clients, is to be cautious when interacting with clients and when touching anything that could be contaminated.

Consider the following:

- Be especially careful when touching doorknobs. (Use a barrier, such as a glove, or wash/sanitize your hands immediately after touching doorknobs.)
- Touch as little as possible while in client homes.
- Minimize the amount of time that you spend in client homes.
- If the client is home, maintain a distance of at least 6 feet during interactions.
- Use your own leashes, so you can avoid handling client leashes. Wash or sanitize your leashes daily.
- Wash your hands (or use hand sanitizer) frequently during the course of the day.

- Limit kissing, petting, or cuddling the dogs you work with.

Finally, maintain a distance of 6 feet (2 meters) from other people while out in public. This may influence where you walk your clients' dogs. Seek out routes that are uncrowded, so that you can minimize your interactions with others.

How should dog walkers communicate with owners during this time?

Communicate with your clients regularly during this pandemic. Having information about your clients' health can help you avoid taking unnecessary risks.

Ask your clients to notify you if:

- anyone in the home develops respiratory signs or fever
- anyone in the home has been in contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19
- anyone in the home has possible occupational exposure to COVID-19 (for example, an emergency room physician)
- anyone in the home or their close contacts have a history of international travel (including to the US or Canada) or their close contacts

Keep in mind that you are not only trying to protect yourself; you are also protecting your other clients. If a client has respiratory signs or has been exposed to COVID-19, take appropriate measures to protect yourself and your other clients. Contact your local health department to determine how to proceed.

Clients at high risk of occupational exposure also deserve special consideration. Consider walking these dogs later in the day, in order to minimize potential spread to other homes.

"Finally, if you develop any signs of COVID-19, including cough, fever, and/or shortness of breath, it is important that you stay home from work."

Finally, if you develop *any* signs of COVID-19, including cough, fever, and/or shortness of breath, it is important that you stay home from work. Create a plan for this scenario now, before you become ill, so that you can quickly update your clients and move forward with your backup plan.

Contributors: Catherine Barnette, DVM

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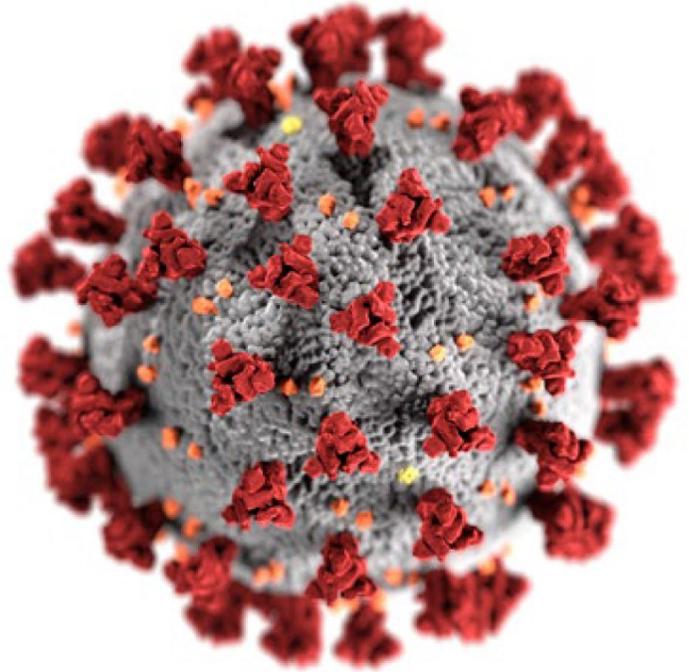
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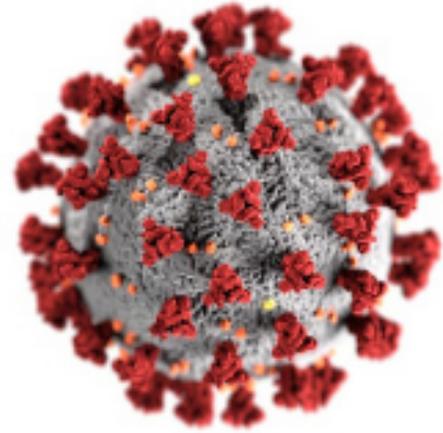


Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a disease caused by a new coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2, that has not previously been identified. This virus is not the same coronavirus that can cause the common cold in humans, nor is it the same as canine coronavirus (CCoV).

Coronaviruses are a family of viruses characterized by crown-like spikes on their surface as seen under the microscope. There are many viruses in this family that cause various types of diseases, such as diarrhea and upper respiratory infections.



Can my pet be affected by COVID-19?

At this time, there is no evidence that any animal or pet can infect humans with the new coronavirus. Additionally, no animals to date have been reported to be sick with COVID-19.

"At this time, there is no evidence that any animal or pet can infect humans with the new coronavirus."

There was a single case of a dog testing positive for the new coronavirus; however, this dog has remained healthy and the positive result may be due to environmental contamination from the infected owner. In other words, the virus may have been present in the dog's nose the same way the virus was likely present on other surfaces in the household.

It is important to note that the test used is very sensitive and can detect very small fragments of the virus; it does not indicate that the virus was intact or contagious. No other cases of pets testing positive have been reported at this time. Further blood testing is being performed to evaluate if this dog is truly infected. If this blood test is positive, this would be a case of human to animal transmission of the new coronavirus; however, this would not be evidence that an animal can infect others.

To date, there has been no testing in cats, though it is likely that cats have been exposed through infected owners, and COVID-19 has not been reported in farm animals, such as horses, donkeys, goats, and other kinds of livestock.

Because this is a new virus and information is still being collected, as a precaution, restrict contact with your pets if you are diagnosed with COVID-19. If this is not possible, practice good hygiene and wash your hands before and after touching your pet, avoid close contact, and wear a facemask.

How is it transmitted?

Current evidence suggests that person-to-person spread is the main source of infection. This occurs through respiratory droplets created when an infected person sneezes or coughs. There is also a possibility of spread via objects or surfaces that have been exposed to the virus; however, this is not suspected as a main source of infection.

Should I monitor my pet for any signs?

Because there have not been any documented cases of pets becoming sick with COVID-19, there are no specific recommendations. However, there is still much to learn about this new virus, and vigilance is key. If your pet exhibits signs of illness (coughing, sneezing, fever, abnormally low energy, etc.), particularly if your pet has been exposed to someone known to be infected with COVID-19, call your veterinarian for guidance.

Should my pet wear a face mask as a precaution?

No. First, it is unlikely that this will not protect your pet from any potential disease transmission. Second, it can cause breathing difficulties, especially in certain breeds of cats and dogs. Third, masks must be saved for use in people with active signs of infection and medical professionals.

Is there a vaccine?

Currently, a vaccine for this new SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus is not available. There is a vaccine for the canine coronavirus (CCoV), however, this vaccine does not work to protect you or your pet from COVID-19.

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