

Caring for Pets during the COVID-19 Outbreak

According to the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), there is no evidence that companion animals are playing a role in the spread of COVID-19. However, during this time of incredible uncertainty, our pets still need veterinary care.

Should your animal fall ill with an infection, suffer an injury or need some other form of treatment, it may not be clear how you can ensure they receive the care they need. As regions, countries and cities enact increasing restrictions on movement, these tips can help you to keep your pet fit and well and to access veterinary help should you need it.

Daily Care

Wash or disinfect your hands before and after interacting with your pet. Although the OIE states pets do not play a role in the spread of COVID-19, this limits the chance of sharing another illness.

Provide regular outdoor exercise while practicing social distancing. This means keeping you and your pet two meters from others.

To prevent boredom, consider how you could provide indoor exercise or mental stimulation for your pet, should your trips outdoors be curtailed.

If you are sick with COVID-19, limit contact with your pet as you would other people.

Visiting the Veterinarian

Call ahead before any veterinarian visit to ask about any new procedures they have in place.

Be aware that only one person may be able to accompany your pet to limit the number of people in the clinic.

Follow staff instructions and limit contact, such as by not shaking hands, whenever possible.

Wash or disinfect your hands before and after the visit.

Planning for Care

If your pet has a procedure scheduled, call your veterinarian to ask whether it can still go ahead. Veterinarians in some countries are currently only able to offer emergency care.

If your pet requires 'routine' treatment that your veterinarian cannot currently deliver, discuss the most appropriate way forward with them.

Keep a reasonable supply of pet food and any required medication available in case you have difficulty going out to buy it.

Consider how you will reach your veterinarian if transportation options are limited.

Staying Informed

Monitor local news to understand how new policies may affect your ability to provide pet care.

Keep up to date with advice from your local government and veterinary authorities.

Advocate for veterinarians to be considered 'essential businesses' so they may continue to provide services to pets during the crisis.

More Information

For more information on caring for pets during the COVID-19 crisis, visit the World Small Animal Veterinary Association website (WSAVA.org) and contact your veterinarian.