

If You Have Animals

- Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses. Some cause illness in people, and others cause illness in certain types of animals.
- Coronaviruses that infect animals can sometimes be spread to people, but this is rare.
- We do not know the exact source of the current outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). The first infections were linked to a live animal market, but the virus is now primarily spreading from person to person.
- The first case of an animal testing positive for the virus in the United States was a tiger that had a respiratory illness at a zoo in New York City.
- We do not have evidence that companion animals, including pets, can spread COVID-19 to people or that they might be a source of infection in the United States.
- CDC is aware of a very small number of pets outside the United States [reportedexternal icon](#) to be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 after close contact with people with COVID-19.
- We do not have evidence to suggest that imported animals or animal products pose a risk for spreading the 2019 novel coronavirus in the United States.
- Further studies are needed to understand if and how different animals could be affected by COVID-19.

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses. Some coronaviruses cause cold-like illnesses in people, while others cause illness in certain types of animals, such as cattle, camels, and bats. Some coronaviruses, such as canine and feline coronaviruses, infect only animals and do not infect humans.

Risk of animals spreading COVID-19 to people

Some coronaviruses that infect animals can sometimes be spread to humans and then spread between people, but this is rare. Severe acute respiratory syndrome ([SARS](#)) and Middle East respiratory syndrome ([MERS](#)) are examples of diseases caused by coronaviruses that originated in animals and spread to people. This is what is suspected to have happened with the virus that caused the current outbreak of COVID-19. However, we do not know the exact source of this virus. Public health officials and partners are working hard to identify the source of COVID-19. The first infections were linked to a live animal market, but the virus is now spreading from person to person. The coronavirus most similar to the virus causing COVID-19 is the one that causes [SARS](#).

The virus that causes COVID-19 spreads mostly from person to person through respiratory droplets from coughing, sneezing, and talking. Recent studies indicate that people who are infected but do not have symptoms likely also play a role in the spread of COVID-19. At this time, there is no evidence that companion animals, including pets, can spread COVID-19 to people or that they might be a source of infection in the United States.

4-14-2020 Items of Note from CDC --- COVID-19 in Animals (non-Human)

Risk of people spreading COVID-19 to animals

CDC is aware of a very small number of pets, including dogs and cats, outside the United States [reportedexternal icon](#) to be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 after close contact with people with COVID-19. CDC has not received any reports of pets becoming sick with COVID-19 in the United States. To date, there is no evidence that pets can spread the virus to people.

The [first caseexternal icon](#) of an animal testing positive for COVID-19 in the United States was a tiger with a respiratory illness at a zoo in New York City. Samples from this tiger were taken and tested after several lions and tigers at the zoo showed signs of respiratory illness. Public health officials believe these large cats became sick after being exposed to a zoo employee who was actively shedding virus. This investigation is ongoing.

We are still learning about this virus, but we know that it is zoonotic and it appears that it can spread from people to animals in some situations.

CDC is working with human and animal health partners to monitor this situation and will continue to provide updates as information becomes available. Further studies are needed to understand if and how different animals could be affected by COVID-19.

Protect pets if you are sick

If you are sick with COVID-19 (either suspected or confirmed), you should restrict contact with pets and other animals, just like you would around other people. Although there have been no 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. This can help ensure both you and your animals stay healthy.

- When possible, have another member of your household care for your animals while you are sick.
- Avoid contact with your pet including, petting, snuggling, being kissed or licked, and sharing food.
- If you must care for your pet or be around animals while you are sick, wash your hands before and after you interact with them.

For more information visit: [What to Do if You are Sick](#).

Risk from imported animals and animal products

4-14-2020 Items of Note from CDC --- **COVID-19 in Animals (non-Human)**

CDC does not have any evidence to suggest that imported animals or animal products pose a risk for spreading COVID-19 in the United States. This is a rapidly evolving situation, and information will be updated as it becomes available.

Regulation of imported animals and animal products

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) play distinct but complementary roles in regulating the importation of live animals and animal products into the United States:

- [CDC regulates](#) animals and animal products that pose a threat to human health;
- [USDA regulates](#) animals and animal products that pose a threat to agriculture; and
- [FWS regulates](#) importation of endangered species and wildlife that can harm the health and welfare of humans, the interests of agriculture, horticulture, or forestry, and the welfare and survival of wildlife resources.

Stay healthy around animals

In the United States, there is no evidence to suggest that any animals, including pets, livestock, or wildlife, might be a source of COVID-19 infection at this time. However, because all animals can carry germs that can make people sick, it's always a good idea to practice healthy habits around pets and other animals.

- Wash your hands after handling animals, their food, waste, or supplies.
- Practice good pet hygiene and clean up after pets properly.
- Talk to your veterinarian if you have questions about your pet's health.

For more information, visit CDC's [Healthy Pets, Healthy People website](#).