



A pet is considered infected with SARS-CoV-2 only after a presumptive positive test for SARS-CoV-2 received by your veterinarian is confirmed by a USDA National Veterinary Services Laboratory.

While we are still learning about SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19 in people), in some situations it appears that people infected with COVID-19 may be able to spread SARS-CoV-2 to certain pets – such as cats, dogs, ferrets, and Syrian hamsters – through close contact. Very few pets have been confirmed to be infected, and even fewer appear to have become clinically ill as a result of their infection.

What does illness in pets infected with SARS-CoV-2 look like?

Limited information is available, but signs of illness thought to be compatible with SARS-CoV-2 infection in pets include fever, coughing, difficulty breathing or shortness of breath, lethargy, sneezing, nasal and eye discharge, vomiting, and diarrhea. If pets do become sick, their illness typically has been mild and resolves with supportive care. If your pet has been confirmed to be infected with SARS-CoV-2, your veterinarian will work with you to develop a treatment plan.

Where should my pet stay during treatment?

- If your pet is stable, and you are able to safely provide care, it's best for your pet to remain at home.
- Separate your pet from other people and pets within your home, just as you would separate a person in quarantine for COVID-19.
- It's especially important that the pet does not share immediate space with people identified by the CDC as being at increased risk from COVID-19 (e.g., over 65 years old, with chronic lung or heart disease, diabetics, immunocompromised).
- Limit interaction with the isolated pet as much as possible, while still providing appropriate care.

Who should take care of my pet and what precautions should they take?

- The primary caretaker should be someone without conditions that would put them at increased risk of complications from COVID-19.
- Protect yourself when caring for your sick pet by wearing a cloth face covering and, if available, gloves.
- Wash your hands before and after caring for the pet, as well as after handling the pet's food and water bowls, toys, bedding, and litter boxes and/or waste.

What other precautions should we take at home?

- Food and water bowls, toys, and litter boxes should be used for that animal only and regularly cleaned and disinfected. Toys that cannot be cleaned or that are damaged should be thrown away and replaced.
- Bedding should be washed regularly.
- Cats should not be allowed to roam outside, if at all possible.
- Dogs with access to a private area for elimination should not be taken on walks. If a private yard is not available, limit walks to close to home and avoid interactions with people and animals.
- Pick up solid waste, using a plastic bag or gloves, and dispose of it safely. Always wash your hands with soap and water immediately after cleaning up after your pet.

When can my pet return to normal activities?

- End home isolation and additional precautions when your veterinarian determines that your pet meets EITHER of the following criteria:

(1) Clinical signs of illness have resolved for at least 72 hours after stopping symptomatic treatment AND it's been at least 14 days since the animal's clinical signs of illness first appeared.

OR

It has been at least 14 days since the pet's last positive test from a lab recognized to perform confirmatory diagnostics, and the pet's clinical signs of illness have improved without the use of medications intended to relieve those clinical signs.

(2) If the animal has been re-tested, the test results are negative AND clinical signs of illness have resolved without the use of medication intended to relieve those clinical signs. Your veterinarian will again consult with the state public health veterinarian or state veterinarian prior to deciding whether to retest.

What if I am unable to provide care at home or my pet is not improving?

- Call your veterinarian. Tell them why you're concerned about your ability to provide home care or your pet's condition.
- Your veterinarian will work with you to determine the best course of action, including whether a recheck examination and adjustments to the treatment plan are recommended.
- If providing the appropriate care for your pet at home is not possible, discuss the option of hospitalization.

Do I need to worry about my pet spreading SARS-CoV-2?

At this time, there is **no evidence** that pets play a significant role in spreading the virus that causes COVID-19. Importantly, the risk of pets spreading COVID-19 to people is considered to be low. In addition, there is no evidence that SARS-CoV-2 can spread to people from the skin, fur, or hair of pets.