

With basic measures, the risk of contracting COVID-19 from your pets is exceptionally low

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If you socially distance your pet(s) the same way you should be socially distancing yourself from other people, there is basically no chance they will bring this virus into the household.

As reports of animals being infected with SARS-CoV-2 (the cause of COVID-19) increase, some people have expressed concern about the risks posed by their pet. Human-to-pet transmission of this virus can occur. How often this occurs is not known, but the role pets play in transmission of the virus to their owner is likely very minor to non-existent.

A few key points must be considered:

- COVID-19 is spread almost exclusively, if not exclusively, person-to-person.
- A pet owner is much more likely to transmit the virus TO their pet than to get it FROM their pet.
- If someone's pet is infected, they got it from a person. If the pet has been kept away from people and people from outside the household, their infection would have come from a household family member.

For a pet to pose a risk of bringing the virus into the household, it must encounter other people or animals outside of the household that are infected. If a pet is socially distanced and kept away from people and animals outside the household, there's essentially no risk of the pet being the source of COVID-19 in a household. If the pet becomes infected, it would have gotten it from someone in the household, and the infected human household member(s) would be the main risk to the rest of the household, not the pet.

The main concern about animals involves the potential for transmitting the virus outside of an infected household. For example, if a cat is infected by its owner and goes to a veterinarian or is allowed to roam, there may be a chance that the cat could infect another person or animal.

Therefore, basic measures can reduce or eliminate the already low risk. These include:

- Socially distance your pets, just like you and the rest of your family. Keep them inside with you, and when outside, keep them under control so they don't interact with anyone else.
- If you're infected, limit contact with people *and* pets.
- If you're infected, keep your pet in the house with you.

Pets can provide important emotional support during challenging times. The risk that they would be a source of COVID-19 in a household is exceptionally low, with some basic practices. While there are reports of people asking to surrender their pet because of fear of COVID-19, the risk posed by driving to a shelter to surrender a pet is probably much greater than the risk posed by a pet.