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There has been news circulating about the ability of animals to become infected with COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) and to potentially transmit the virus to people, either through direct transmission or as a fomite (on the fur or body). This information sheet is to provide clarity and factual information based on the statements from the AVMA, CDC, USDA and scientific publications. Most importantly, there is currently still no evidence that domestic animals can transmit COVID-19 to people. COVID-19 is primarily transmitted by contact with an infected person's bodily secretions, such as saliva or mucus droplets in a cough or sneeze.

Information is also being shared in the media that cats can be infected. Please note that our stance aligns with the AVMA and scientific information in that there is no reliable and scientific evidence that cats are readily infected by people with COVID-19, become sick, or spread the virus to other animals under natural conditions. Rest assured that our doctors and staff are doing everything possible to maintain safe practices to keep you and your pets healthy. To help alleviate some concerns that you may have regarding Covid-19 and pets, the CDC has issued the following Key Points. We have also included some FAQs.

- Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses. Some cause illness in people, and others cause illness in certain types of animals.
- Some 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 thought to be linked to a live animal market, but the virus is now primarily spreading from person to person.
- At this time, there is no evidence that animals play a significant role in spreading the virus that causes COVID-19.
- Based on the limited information available to date, the risk of animals spreading COVID-19 to people is considered to be low.
- We are still learning about this virus, but it appears that it can spread from people to animals in some situations.
- The first case of an animal testing positive for the virus in the United States was in a tiger that had a respiratory illness at a zoo in New York City.
- CDC is aware of a small number of pets, including cats and dogs, [reported](#) to be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19, mostly after close contact with people with COVID-19.
- Treat pets as you would other human family members – do not let pets interact with people or animals outside the household. If a person inside the household becomes sick, isolate that person from everyone else, including pets.
- Further studies are needed to understand if and how different animals could be affected by the virus that causes COVID-19 and the role animals may play in the spread of COVID-19.
- This is a rapidly evolving situation and information will be updated as it becomes available. For more information, see the CDC's [COVID-19 and Animals Frequently Asked Questions](#).

Q: Can domestic animals transmit COVID-19 to people? A: There is currently no evidence that domestic animals can transmit COVID-19 to people. Despite the number of global cases of COVID-19 in people surpassing the one million mark as of April 12, 2020, there have only been very limited examples of two dogs and one cat in Hong Kong, and a tiger in New York, that had positive results of tests for natural infection. None of the dogs or cats determined to be test-positive showed signs of illness consistent with COVID-19. The two dogs and one cat lived closely with one or more people with a confirmed diagnosis and clinical symptoms of COVID-19. No conclusions can responsibly be drawn regarding the cat in Belgium because of questions surrounding collection and analysis of samples for testing for SARS-CoV-2 and the absence of an evaluation of that cat for other, more common causes for its clinical signs.

Q: Can pets serve as fomites in the spread of COVID-19? A: COVID-19 appears to be primarily transmitted by contact with an infected person's bodily secretions, such as saliva or mucus droplets in a cough or sneeze. COVID-19 might be able to be transmitted by touching a contaminated surface or object (i.e., a fomite) and then touching the mouth, nose, or possibly eyes, but this appears to be a secondary route. Smooth (non-porous) surfaces (e.g., countertops, door knobs) transmit viruses better than porous materials (e.g., paper money, pet fur), because porous, and especially fibrous, materials absorb and trap the pathogen (virus), making it harder to contract through simple touch. Since pet's hair is porous and fibrous, it is very unlikely that you would contract COVID-19 by handling your pet.

Q: Should our pets be tested for COVID-19? A. Routine testing of domestic animals for COVID-19 is not being recommended by the AVMA, CDC, USDA, or the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians (AAVLD). The current recommendation is that if a new, concerning illness is observed that cannot be otherwise explained, and the companion animal has had close and prolonged contact with a person with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 infection, the veterinarian should contact the state public health veterinarian or designated health official to discuss whether or not there is a need to test that animal for COVID-19. IDEXX Reference Laboratories has made available to veterinarians the IDEXX SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) RealPCR™ Test for pets. Through the guidance of IDEXX and medical experts it has been determined that veterinarians are only to order the IDEXX SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) RealPCR Test after consulting with a public health authority (for example, a state public health veterinarian in the United States) and all three of these specific conditions are met:

- **Pet is living in a household with a human who has COVID-19 or has tested positive for the virus**
- **Pet has already been tested for more common infections, that a veterinarian has ruled out**
- **Pet (especially cats and ferrets) is showing clinical signs consistent with COVID-19**