

# Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)

## 1. What is a novel coronavirus?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses. Many of them infect animals, but some coronaviruses from animals can evolve (change) and infect humans, then spread from person-to-person. This is what happened with the current novel coronavirus. Diseases from coronaviruses in people typically cause mild to moderate illness, like the common cold. Some, like the SARS or MERS viruses, cause serious infections like pneumonia.

## 2. What are common symptoms of COVID-19 in humans?

Information to date shows this new virus causes symptoms consistent with a respiratory illness, such as cough, fever, and in some, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing.

## 3. How does COVID-19 spread?

Like other respiratory illnesses, such as influenza, human coronaviruses most commonly spread from person to person through:

- Droplets produced through coughing and sneezing
- Close personal contact, such as caring for an infected person
- Touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes before washing your hands

## 4. Can pets become sick with and spread COVID-19?

To date, there are no reports of pets becoming sick with COVID-19 or of them spreading it to people or other pets. In Hong Kong in February, one dog tested positive for COVID-19 on multiple tests after being in contact with its owner who had also tested positive for COVID-19. The dog has not had any signs of illness and continues to be quarantined for further testing. At this time, there is no evidence that pets, including dogs and cats, can spread COVID-19.

## 5. What should I do if I have to interact with a pet who was in close contact with a person with respiratory symptoms?

- Wash your hands well before and after each interaction with animals.
- Do not allow pets to lick your face during handling and avoid excessive interaction such as petting, cuddling, hand-feeding, and sharing food.



### Key Messages:

There is no evidence that pets can become sick with or spread COVID-19.

Pets can spread other diseases to people, however, so wash your hands before and after handling pets.

Animal care and control staff should follow standard protocols for handling sick animals or those exposed to disease.

Where can the public go for more information?

**Los Angeles County  
Department of Public Health**  
Dial 2-1-1  
**California Department of  
Public Health**  
916-558-1784  
**Centers for Disease Control  
and Prevention**  
800-CDC-INFO  
800-232-4636

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## 6. What should I do if the pet is impounded at the shelter?

- Place the pet in a room designated only for similarly exposed animals, away from the general population and away from other serious diseases (parvo, distemper)
- Keep the pet in the designated room – do not walk or allow it to roam around the shelter
- Ideally keep one kennel empty in between each animal if there are multiple animals in the room
- Monitor each animal closely for signs of illness and report to the Department of Public Health immediately if you notice signs
- Designate limited staff that have access to this room for cleaning and medical care – to limit how much of the virus could be spread to different parts of the shelter.
- Clean the designated room last in relation to the entire shelter population. Use personal protective equipment when cleaning or spraying (goggles, mask, gloves, disposable gown).
- Follow shelter protocols for standard disinfection of the kennel or run and items that have been in contact with the animal (food and water bowls, bedding, toys, etc.)
- Follow shelter protocols for standard disinfection of the truck used to transport the animal