



The College of Veterinarians of Ontario recognizes that pet and animal owners are concerned about the potential implications of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) on the well-being of their animals. These are unusual and challenging times as we all work together to do what we can to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

### **Availability of veterinary services**

There may be factors related to COVID-19 that will affect veterinary facilities and their ability to provide veterinary services. The College is encouraging veterinarians to use their best judgment to determine the services they can reasonably and safely provide during this public health emergency. You are advised to contact your veterinarian to discuss current services available or changes to upcoming appointments.

The public is encouraged to be responsible and avoid exposing veterinary clinics and hospitals to COVID-19. Veterinary clinics are vigilant with infection control and biosecurity protocols designed to keep their staff, clients and patients safe. Please ensure you engage in all public health measures (hand washing, social distancing, call before you visit, refrain from attending appointment if you are ill, etc.) to support the availability of safe veterinary services in Ontario.

Veterinarians may be taking additional measures during this time to provide services safely. These may include making use of telemedicine to consult with clients; completing patient triage outside of the clinic or hospital; and postponing elective procedures. Again, trust your veterinarian's judgment on the services they can provide during the limitations encountered by the current public health emergency.

If your veterinarian needs to close temporarily due to staffing shortages or other circumstances, you will be notified of the closure and you will have access to your animal(s) medical record information. Your veterinarian may also be able to refer you to another facility for care. These provisions are required through the veterinarian-client-patient relationship.

If you do not have a veterinarian, please visit the College's Find a Veterinarian search tool, found on the College's website. You can search for a veterinarian in your area who offers the services you seek. Information on the veterinarian's licence status and history and contact information is also available.

### **COVID-19 and your animals**

According to the [Government of Canada](#), there is currently no evidence to suggest that COVID-19 can spread from human to animal or animal to human.

It is possible that some types of animals can be infected with COVID-19, but there is no evidence that pets or other animals can spread the virus. There are still many unknowns about COVID-19 and this is an area that remains to be studied and understood.

If you have been diagnosed with COVID-19 and have a pet or other animal:

- avoid close contact with them
- practise good cough etiquette
- avoid coughing and sneezing on your animals
- always wash your hands before touching or feeding them
- limit your animal's contact with other people and animals

There have not been any reports of livestock being infected by COVID-19 anywhere to date. However, livestock producers should follow normal biosecurity measures as always. This includes limiting visitors or workers who may have travelled to, or been in contact with, someone from an affected area. Producers are encouraged to consult the following resources for more information on-farm disease prevention:

- [National Biosecurity Standards and Biosecurity Principles](#)
- [National Farm-Level Biosecurity Planning Guide](#)

**For more information:**

**Worms and Germs Blog** – For further information on risks you may wish to keep in mind regarding your pets and the COVID-19 pandemic, visit the [Worms and Germs Blog](#), published by the University of Guelph's Centre for Public Health and Zoonoses.

**Ontario Animal Health Network** – The Ontario Animal Health Network has published a guide about [caring your horse during a pandemic](#) to assist horse owners with developing a plan for their horse's care if they become ill or need to self-isolate.

**Helpful Reference Materials:**

[Updates from the College on COVID-19](#)  
[www.cvo.org/coronavirus](http://www.cvo.org/coronavirus)

[Professional Practice Standard - Informed Client Consent](#)  
<https://cvo.org/CVO/media/College-of-Veterinarians-of-Ontario/Resources%20and%20Publications/Professional%20Practice%20Standards/PPSInformedClientConsent.pdf>

[Ministry of Health](#)  
<https://www.ontario.ca/page/2019-novel-coronavirus>

[Infection prevention and control best practices for small animal veterinary clinics \(general\)](#)  
<https://oahn.ca/resources/ipc-best-practices/>

[OVMA \(COVID-19 FAQ\)](#)  
<https://www.ovma.org/veterinarians/coronavirus-faq/>

[Worms & Germs Blog \(COVID-19 posts\)](#)  
<https://www.wormsandgermsblog.com/tags/covid-19/>

[Public Health Agency of Canada](https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/frequently-asked-questions.html) <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/frequently-asked-questions.html>

[World Health Organization](https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019)

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

[OIE World Organization for Animal Health](https://www.oie.int/en/scientific-expertise/specific-information-and-recommendations/questions-and-answers-on-2019-novel-coronavirus/)

<https://www.oie.int/en/scientific-expertise/specific-information-and-recommendations/questions-and-answers-on-2019-novel-coronavirus/>