

## Frequently Asked Questions

# Animal-Related FAQs for COVID-19

*(Post Circuit Breaker – Phase 2)*

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## **General**

### **1. What is the risk of getting COVID-19 from pets, birds or animals?**

The current spread of COVID-19 is a result of human to human transmission. While there have been sporadic isolated reports in other countries of animals being tested positive after being in contact with COVID-19 infected persons, the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and other national animal health organisations have maintained that there is currently no evidence that companion animals play a role in the spread of the disease to humans.

AVS will continue to keep in close contact with OIE to monitor the developments on the virus as the situation is still evolving and review any further information that surfaces. We are also in contact with veterinary clinics, animal welfare groups and animal-related businesses to share information and advisories on COVID-19.

It is recommended that persons that are unwell limit their contact with pets as well as other people. Good hygiene practices are encouraged when handling pets, with thorough handwashing before and after direct contact with pets, their supplies and food.

### **2. What should I do if I spot dead or sick animals in my home/neighbourhood?**

Members of the public are advised not to touch or pick up any sick or dead animals. If they did, do practise good hygiene by thoroughly washing their hands with soap.

If they encounter sick animals, they can call the Animal Response Centre at 1800-476-1600. For disposal of carcasses, if found within a housing estate, they can contact the respective Town Council, or the National Environment Agency (NEA) for other public areas.

### **3. Do local bats/wildlife carry COVID-19? How does NParks know this? What should members of the public do if they encounter bats?**

NParks has biosurveillance programmes to detect animal diseases, and has been studying our bat and other wildlife populations since 2011. To date, NParks' biosurveillance programmes have not detected COVID-19, in our bats and native wildlife. NParks will continue to closely monitor the local wildlife populations.

If you do encounter bats, they are generally shy and do not attack or show aggression unless a person attempts to handle them. Please refrain from feeding or getting close to the bats. If they do come into contact with the bats, they should practise good hygiene by thoroughly washing their hands with soap.

### **4. What should members of the public do if they encounter wildlife?**

Members of the public should observe wildlife from a distance, and not feed or get close to them. More info on animal advisories and encounters can be found on our website ([www.nparks.gov.sg](http://www.nparks.gov.sg))

## Pet Owners

### **5. What should pet owners observe?**

Pet owners should continue to care for their pets while adopting good hygiene practices. There is also no need to restrict the movement of pets. If pets are observed to be unwell, owners should call their veterinary clinics first before bringing them for veterinary treatment.

Owning a pet is a lifelong commitment and owners must be responsible and provide care for the animals. AVS does not condone pet abandonment and will look into all feedback on animal welfare/cruelty, including pet abandonment. Individuals who are found guilty of abandoning their pets or fail in their duty of care towards their pets, are liable to a maximum fine of \$10,000 and/or a maximum jail term of 12 months for first conviction.

### **6. I am under a Stay Home Notice/Leave of Absence/Quarantine, can I still take care of my pet? What should I do if I am a confirmed COVID-19 patient and am unable to take care of my pet?**

Pet owners should continue to care for their pet at home.

It is recommended that persons that are unwell limit their contact with pets as well as other people. Good hygiene practices are encouraged when handling pets, with thorough handwashing before and after direct contact with pets, their supplies and food.

If pet owners are under SHN/LOA/hospitalised or quarantined outside of their homes and are unable to care for their pet, it is recommended for them to seek help from another member of the household. It is in the best interests of the animal to be kept in a familiar environment as this would help to minimise stress on the pet.

Should pets fall sick during this period, other members of the household can contact their regular vet. If other members of the household are also unable to leave the house, they may contact NParks/AVS for assistance at 1800-476 1600.

### **7. MOH health advisory says to avoid contact with live animals, poultry and birds. Does that include my pets?**

No. MOH's advice is meant primarily for members of public who are overseas or planning to travel overseas, and may come into contact with live animals, poultry and birds. Currently, there is no evidence of animal to human transmission in Singapore. Hence, there is no known risk of people being infected by the COVID-19 through your pets or other animals.

### **8. Are pets whose owners have tested positive for COVID-19 required to be placed in quarantine?**

There is currently no evidence that companion animals, including pets, play an epidemiological role in the spread of human infections with the COVID-19 virus.

If pet owners are hospitalised or quarantined outside of their homes and are unable to care for their pet, it is recommended for them to seek help from another member of the household. It is in the best interests of the animal to be kept in a familiar environment as this would help to minimise stress on the pet. It is recommended that persons that are unwell limit their contact

with pets as well as other people. Good hygiene practices are encouraged when handling pets, with thorough handwashing before and after direct contact with pets, their supplies and food.

### **Animal Boarding Facility**

**9. I operate a licensed pet boarding facility. Can I take in healthy pets belonging to confirmed COVID-19 patients or people under SHN/QO?**

Licensed pet boarders can take on healthy pets belonging to confirmed COVID-19 patients or people under SHN/QO if they have been unable to make alternative pet care arrangements (e.g. care from other members of the household).

Licensed pet boarders are to abide by safe management measures by MOH and operational guidelines for the Animal and Veterinary Sector (e.g. safe distancing amongst employees, temperature monitoring, observing good personal hygiene) to minimise the spread of COVID-19.