

Coronavirus and Pets
Updated: March 13, 2020

[Your organization name here] hopes to reassure people with pets that, as far as experts know, your dogs and cats are safe and can serve as a source of comfort during a crisis.

Multiple health organizations, including the Centers for Disease Control, World Health Organization and the American Veterinary Medical Association have stated that pets and domestic animals are not at risk for contracting COVID-19.

- **The real threat at this point is animal shelters across the country facing an increase of dogs and cats in need of homes because fewer people are visiting shelters right now, and in some cases shelters are having to temporarily close to the public.**
- It's beneficial to have pets in your house as they can serve as a source of comfort.
- The companionship of pets has been shown to reduce stress and lower anxiety, helping people to feel calmer and more secure when the news from the outside world is distressing.

If you don't have a pet and are thinking about getting one, now is the perfect time to "try it on" by fostering. Please contact our foster department at [\[foster phone number/email here\]](#).

- Animal shelters and rescues are bracing themselves for the possibility of increased intake, fewer adoptions and fewer foster homes, and the possibility of no space.
- Individuals can reduce the impact on our local shelters by reaching out to foster or donate to support the animals in our community.
- Shelters and pet adoption facilities nationwide need people to foster pets on a temporary basis.
- And people can also help by offering support to their neighbors who might need help caring for their pets.

People with pets should be prepared with enough food, water and medications for your pet, in case of lockdown or self-quarantine.

- Have on hand at least a one-month supply of your pets' medications, litter, and food.
- Make sure your pets' vaccination records are current and you have copies.
- Consider the care of your pets as you put together your household readiness plan.

Rely on trusted and up-to-date sources for the latest information and recommendations.

Resources:

- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#)
- [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#)

Q&A

If we are stuck at home for long periods of times, what kinds of things can we do to keep our pets active?

Keep their minds active — it could be a great time to train your pet! Teach them basic manners and life skills. It'll increase their confidence and your bond together.

For dogs: Provide a variety of toys, play hide and seek with treats and toys, offer a variety of soothing smells and sounds, freeze peanut butter stuffed Kongs.

For cats: Provide cat furniture for romping and climbing, treat them to catnip, grow wheatgrass for them to snack on, buy a drinking fountain if they like to drink from faucet, buy a window perch or make one yourself, buy a cat exercise wheel if they like exercise.

What happens to shelter or rescue animals if areas are quarantined? Will people who work in animal welfare be exempt from some restrictions? (Best Friends' answers below. Please modify to reflect your plans and policies.)

We are advising our staff to only come to work if they feel well. If they don't feel well, they are advised to stay home. Many of our staff, who don't normally work directly in animal care, offered to help care for animals in the case of a staff shortage.

In the case of quarantine, we've talked about closing our Lifesaving Centers and sending out a plea for fosters. We've already seen pleas for fosters from one shelter in St. Louis where they had five fosters sign up within 30 minutes.

Should people avoid dog parks, or doggy day care facilities right now?

As with any public place, people should continue to follow recommended preventive actions, such as thoroughly washing your hands and avoiding crowds whenever possible, especially if you are in a high-risk group as identified by the experts.