

Dumb Friends League – Denver, CO

COVID-19: What to do with your pets

Every one of us must come together to keep pets safe and healthy during this time of uncertainty. Many of the things we normally do have changed. With the help of our thoughtful supporters, we can educate our community on how to best care for our furry companions.

Below are some commonly asked questions and a community sheltering and veterinary care update. We hope you will share this information with your friends and neighbors.

Can my dog or cat get Covid-19?

Dogs and cats cannot contract the human Covid-19 (coronavirus). While each species has their own coronavirus, people cannot get the pet version, and pets cannot contract the human version. As we are isolating ourselves for disease control, contact with pets brings us comfort.

Does my dog or cat pose a risk for coronavirus transmission?

It may seem odd to think about it this way, but dogs and cats are surfaces, and like any other surface, an infected person can theoretically pet a dog or a cat and distribute virus particles onto the animal's fur. Someone could then come along and pet the animal, pick up virus particles and then touch their own face and transmit the disease. It's important to note that the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has not verified any situations where transmission from a pet to a human occurred. However, there are simple ways to limit any risk that might exist. After petting an unknown animal, wash your hands, especially before touching your face. If you are bringing a new pet into your household, consider wiping the pet down with a damp towel or even giving the pet a bath.

Should I get my pet vaccinated in case they have to be boarded unexpectedly?

As you can imagine, veterinary professionals who are interacting with the general public are challenged to stay healthy and limit exposure. The American Veterinary Medical Association recommends all routine care be temporarily suspended. Veterinarians need to be available to treat serious illness and injuries, and the CDC has asked that medical supplies be used judiciously as they are needed for the response to Covid-19. Vaccinations are vital to protect pets against many diseases, and once this crisis is over, it is important to ensure your pet's vaccinations are up to date.

What should I do with my pet if I or someone in my family gets Covid-19?

LOVE them and enjoy their company! If your health is not greatly diminished and you are able, keep your pet in your home, and give them plenty of love! Your pet is not going to get sick from Covid-19, and you'll find them to be a comfort during turbulent times. Many shelters are limiting adoptions due to social distancing requirements, which creates a capacity challenge. Anyone considering relinquishing a pet should determine if they can continue to care for that pet until community functions have stabilized.

How can I help pets in my neighborhood?

If you are able, let your neighbors know that you can temporarily keep their pet if they are unable to do so due to hospitalization, illness or housing challenges. What a great opportunity for our “villages” to come together and support one another and our animals. If accepting a pet from someone that sick, it is prudent to give the pet a bath or wipe the pet with a damp towel as soon as possible.

What if my pet needs veterinary care during this crisis?

Veterinary hospitals are considered “essential businesses” and as long as their staff remains healthy, most veterinary hospitals are continuing to see sick and injured patients. If your pet needs care, please know that your veterinary professionals are doing everything they can to be there for your pet but be aware that social distancing will require adjustments to how you interact with the veterinary team. Please be patient, take a deep breath and understand we are all in this together, and we will get through it together.

How can I help other pets in need?

Urgent veterinary care for people who cannot afford it is woefully lacking in all communities. The Dumb Friends League Solutions – Veterinary Hospital (SVH) is the only subsidized veterinary hospital in Colorado, and it is being overwhelmed by demand. Just yesterday, SVH received calls from 374 pet owners who needed help. While our team is doing all they can to serve the needs of this community, it is impossible to meet the demand. Donating to SVH helps us serve this population, which, with current unemployment rates in Colorado, is expected to increase drastically.

The Colorado Veterinary Medical Association has a fund that can help rural veterinarians provide treatment for animals whose owners cannot afford it. However, this is a very limited resource.

We are working to create a better statewide system to help provide veterinary care, and the League is committed to adding resources for these animals.