Department of Health and Human Services |  Centers for Disease Control and Prevention | Office of the Director

[**Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)**](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html)

**ASL Video Series: Protecting Service and Therapy Animals**

It is important to protect service and therapy animals from COVID-19 so that they stay healthy.

A small number of pets worldwide, including cats and dogs, were infected with COVID-19, mostly after close contact with people who had COVID-19. Based on the information that is currently available, the chance of animals spreading COVID-19 to people is thought to be low.

**Protect your service animal**

Here are some ways you can protect yourself and your service animals from exposure to COVID-19.

Both you, the handler, and your service animal should stay at least 6 feet away from others when possible and avoid crowded places, especially poorly ventilated indoor spaces. Wear a mask that covers your mouth and nose and fits snugly against the sides of your face when you are in public settings and when you are around people who don’t live in your household, especially when other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain. When possible, do not take your service animal into places where people might have COVID-19 or places where you cannot prevent interaction or contact with people who might have COVID-19. Avoid contact between sick people and your service animal as much as possible. If your service animal must be around a sick person, the sick person should wear a mask. Clean your service animal’s collars, vests, leashes or harnesses, and other supplies frequently using soap and water or detergent. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not readily available, clean your hands with a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Do not wipe or bathe your service animal with chemical disinfectants, alcohol, or hydrogen peroxide. Do not use other products, such as hand sanitizer, household cleaning wipes, or industrial or surface cleaners, on your service animal. There is no information that shows that the virus can spread to people from the skin, fur, or hair of pets or service animals. Do not put masks on your service animals. Covering an animal’s face could harm the animal.

If your service animal is sick, call your veterinarian and do not go out in public with the animal, except to get medical care.

**Here are some ways you can protect your therapy animals.**

Places where people are at higher risk for becoming seriously ill from COVID-19 may not allow therapy animals. If therapy animals are allowed, follow the local directions and rules for keeping at least 6 feet away from other people and animals, wearing a mask, and practicing other ways to prevent COVID-19 from spreading, such as washing your hands and using hand sanitizer. If your therapy animal is invited to a facility or other setting, follow these steps:

Whenever possible, keep therapy animals at least 6 feet away from people and other animals who are not participating in the therapy visit. You and other participants should wear a mask during the visit. Do not take your therapy animal out in public if your therapy animal is sick or has tested positive for the virus that causes COVID-19. If someone was sick with COVID-19, they should wait until they recover to have contact with therapy animals. You and anyone petting or having contact with your therapy animal should wash their hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol before and after every contact. Use soap and water or detergent to clean things such as toys, collars, leashes, harnesses, therapy vests and scarves, and food and water bowls frequently—especially between therapy visits.

Avoid using items that multiple people handle, especially if you took these items to multiple facilities. Do not let other people handle things that go into your therapy animal’s mouth, such as toys and treats. Do not allow your therapy animals to lick or give “kisses.” Do not wipe or bathe your service animal with chemical disinfectants, alcohol, hydrogen peroxide. Do not use other products, such as hand sanitizer, household cleaning wipes, or industrial or surface cleaners on your service animal. There is no evidence that the virus can spread to people from the skin, fur, or hair of companion animals. Do not put masks on your therapy animals. Covering an animal’s face could harm the animal.

If you are a service or therapy animal handler and you get sick with COVID-19 or have symptoms of COVID-19, view the CDC ASL video *Things You Can Do to Manage COVID-19*.

If your service or therapy animal gets sick after contact with a person with COVID-19, call your veterinarian.

For more ASL videos, including information on Caring for a Sick Pet or Service Animal, How to Protect Yourself, and Cleaning and Disinfecting your Home, go to the CDC YouTube channel.

For the latest information in English text, please visit cdc.gov/coronavirus