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Guidance

# Coronavirus (COVID-19): advice for people in England with animals

Advice for pet owners and livestock keepers on looking after the welfare of animals during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. This advice applies to England only.

Published 27 March 2020

Last updated 18 May 2020 — see all updates

From:

Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-environment-food-rural-affairs>) and Animal and Plant Health Agency (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/animal-and-plant-health-agency>)

Applies to:

England (see guidance for Wales (<https://gov.wales/advice-pet-owners-coronavirus-covid-19>), Scotland (<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-animal-owners/>), and Northern Ireland (<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/covid-19-horses-pets-guidance>))

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You should stay alert and follow the current coronavirus guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/full-guidance-on-staying-at-home-and-away-from-others>) at all times.

There is no evidence that:

- coronavirus is circulating in pets or other animals in the UK
- pets, other domestic animals or livestock can transmit the disease to humans

In line with general advice on coronavirus, you should wash your hands before and after being around or handling animals or their food.

There is no evidence that you need to wash your pets to control the spread of coronavirus. Never use household or commercial cleaning products, disinfectants or antibacterial wipes on pets.

## If your animal needs vet treatment

If your animal needs treatment, phone the vet to arrange the best way to meet their needs.

## Dogs

If you have symptoms of coronavirus you should self-isolate at home for 7 days, or 14 days as a household. You should arrange a test (<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-for-coronavirus/>) to find out if you have coronavirus.

If your dog cannot exercise at home, you should ask someone outside of your household to walk your dog for you.

### **If you do not have symptoms of coronavirus**

You may leave your house to walk your dog. You should stay 2 metres away from anyone outside of your household.

When walking your dog in areas used by other people, you should consider putting your dog on a lead to ensure you can stay 2 metres away from others.

You should wash your hands before and after handling your dog.

### **If you're walking dogs on behalf of someone not able to**

You may walk a dog for someone who is unable to leave their house because they are self-isolating or being shielded.

You should wash your hands before and after handling the dog and keep 2 metres away from other people and animals, including when handing over the dog to the owner.

## Cats

You should wash your hands before and after any contact with your cat.

## Horses, livestock and other animals

If you have symptoms of coronavirus you should self-isolate at home for 7 days, or 14 as a household. You should arrange a test (<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-for-coronavirus/>) to find out if you have coronavirus.

If you have a horse that you don't keep at home (for example, you keep it in livery, a stables or on private land), you should not visit it whilst you are self-isolating. You should contact your yard manager or vet to make suitable animal welfare arrangements.

If you have livestock such as cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, poultry, or any other types of livestock, you should arrange for someone else who is not self-isolating to care for your animals.

Where this is not possible, you should ensure the basic needs of your animals are met.

You should wash your hands before and after handling your animals and stay 2 metres away from other people.

If you're too unwell to care for your animals and there is no one to help, you should call your local authority.

### **If you do not have symptoms of coronavirus**

You may:

- leave your house to provide care for your horse or livestock.
- ride your horse

You should stay 2 metres away from others. You should wash your hands before and after contact with any animals.

### **If your horse needs attention from a farrier**

If your horse requires attention from a farrier, you should phone the farrier for advice to best meet your horse's needs.

You and the farrier should stay 2 metres apart and wash your hands before and after contact with the horse.

## **Contact**

If you have any queries, email the [APHA Customer Advice team customeradvice@apha.gov.uk](mailto:customeradvice@apha.gov.uk).

For commercial transporter enquiries, email the [APHA Welfare in Transport team WIT@apha.gov.uk](mailto:WIT@apha.gov.uk).

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1. 18 May 2020  
Updated guidance for people in England with pets or livestock.
2. 31 March 2020  
Updated the section under horse, livestock and other animals to clarify that you should contact your local authority if you're too ill to look after animals.
3. 27 March 2020  
First published.

## **Related content**

- Code of practice for the welfare of cats (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/code-of-practice-for-the-welfare-of-cats>)
- Code of practice for the welfare of dogs (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/code-of-practice-for-the-welfare-of-dogs>)
- Animal activities licensing: guidance for local authorities (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/animal-activities-licensing-guidance-for-local-authorities>)
- Live transport: welfare regulations (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/farm-animal-welfare-during-transportation>)
- Buying a cat or dog (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/buying-a-cat-or-dog>)

## **Explore the topic**

- Animal welfare (<https://www.gov.uk/topic/keeping-farmed-animals/animal-welfare>)
- Pets (<https://www.gov.uk/topic/animal-welfare/pets>)