

As we continue to navigate into new territory with COVID-19, we wanted to keep everyone up to date with the most recent and up to date information regarding owners and their pets. We have been keeping up with the experts and their recommendations here at HSTC. So what does that mean?

First and foremost, it is still believed that dogs, cats and ferrets CANNOT give COVID-19 to humans. This is continuing to be studied and the American Veterinary Medical Association agrees that there is still no evidence of this virus infecting animal hosts that in turn can infect humans. There are no cases in the United States (the country with the most cases of COVID-19 and a country where 68% of the population owns a pet) of a domestic pet being infected or showing signs of contracting COVID-19.

That being said, there is some weak evidence that shows humans with a high enough virus load can transmit COVID-19 to other animals. There are five cases of animals having contracted COVID-19 from a human caretaker around the world at this time. In light of over 2 million confirmed human cases, we can conclude that this transmission is rare. We still recommend that if you or a member of your household test positive, that you limit exposure to your pets while you are recovering. If possible, have a healthy family member provide care and if they cannot it is recommended you wear a cloth face covering; don't share food, kiss, or hug them, and wash your hands before and after any contact with them.

With all of this information, the AVMA states "While these are recommended as good practices, it is important to remember that, at this time, there is no evidence to suggest that animals that may be incidentally infected by humans are playing a role in the spread of COVID-19. Human outbreaks are driven by person-to-person transmission. Accordingly, we see no reason to remove pets from homes even if COVID-19 has been identified in members of the household, unless there is risk that the pet itself is not able to be cared for appropriately. During this pandemic emergency, pets and people each need the support of the other and veterinarians are there to support the good health of both."

If you have any further questions or would like to read up more on the cases and experiments we recommend looking at the following website:

<https://www.avma.org/resources-tools/animal-health-and-welfare/covid-19/sars-cov-2-animals-including-pets>

Thank you to all of our fosters, volunteers, adopters, sponsors and our community for everything you have done and continue to do for us here at The Humane Society of the Treasure Coast, even during these uncertain times!

Dr. Patricia Diskant
Shelter Veterinarian