

COVID-19 RESPONSE

Procedures and key messages for managing cases at the WCVM Veterinary Medical Centre

To help keep everyone safe, the WCVM Veterinary Medical Centre is limiting interaction between clinical staff and animal owners.

The risk of contracting COVID-19 from our animal patients is extremely low. Based on information from the World Health Organization and other sources, human-to-human contact is the main risk. The following recommendations will help to minimize that risk:

- **WASH** your hands or use hand sanitizer frequently.
- **WIPE** objects after passing them between you and others.
- **WIPE** objects, counters, surfaces and any touch point after each use.
- **WIPE** counters and surfaces frequently, especially in areas used by more than one person.
- **DON'T ALLOW** clients to enter the hospital. Use the phone to talk to the animals' owners.

MANAGING PATIENTS

Our approach is to assume that all clients and their animals may have been exposed to the virus regardless of an owner's known COVID status.

- **USE** the same preventive measures with all clients, whether they are COVID-positive or not.
- **USE** the same preventive measures with all animal patients, whether owners are COVID-positive or not.
- If clients say they are COVID-positive or living with a COVID-positive person, ask them to arrange for someone outside of their home (if possible) to transport sick animals to the VMC.
- **PLACE** canine patients from COVID-positive homes in a designated kennel ward.

Q. When do we use isolation procedures?

- **USE** the isolation door and follow isolation procedures for animals that may have contagious disease.
- **DO NOT USE** isolation door or procedures for animals whose owners are COVID-positive.



Wash your
hands often



Wipe objects and
surfaces regularly



No clients in
hospital

If you have concerns, tell someone!

Ask questions or email wcvm.covid19questions@usask.ca.
Your input helps to identify gaps or important messages.

SPECIAL PRECAUTIONS

- Current information indicates that the virus has a short life span on a pet's fur, and the risk of transmission from most pets is extremely low. The known risk is human-to-human transmission.
- However, preliminary data suggests that ferrets, cats and hamsters can be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 and transmit the virus to other animals, and potentially, to people.
- As a precaution, the VMC recommends that clinical team members wear face shields in addition to other personal protective equipment (PPE) when handling ferrets, cats and hamsters that are admitted for emergency care.

MANAGING FELINE PATIENTS

Since cats may be susceptible to infection and could potentially spread the coronavirus that causes COVID-19, everyone must wear personal protective equipment or PPE (including face shields) when handling feline patients.

- **USE** the same admission procedures for all cats.
- **USE** the iodine therapy room to house any hospitalized cats with respiratory disease.
- **USE** the iodine therapy anteroom to house any hospitalized cats from known COVID-positive homes but without respiratory disease.
- **USE** feline ward or ICU for all other cats, as necessary.
- **CHANGE** all PPE after providing care to cats from COVID-positive homes or cats with respiratory disease.

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STEP-BY-STEP PROCEDURES

Reception staff

- **WEAR** a mask at all times in the hospital.
- **ALWAYS WEAR** a lab coat, mask and gloves when you interact with a client.
- **WIPE** any kennel or container with disinfectant before handling.
- **WEAR** a lab coat or gown, mask and gloves when you interact with staff in a space of less than two metres.
- **USE** the same lab coat and mask for a full shift unless they become soiled.
- **ALWAYS CHANGE** your gloves between interactions. Wash or disinfect hands when changing gloves.
- **ANY TIME** you have concerns, go ahead and change your lab coat, mask or gloves.

Technical staff and clinicians

- **WEAR** a mask at all times in the hospital.
- **ALWAYS WEAR** a lab coat, mask and gloves when you interact with a client.
- **WIPE** the animal with disinfectant before you begin a physical exam.
- **WEAR** a lab coat or gown, mask and gloves when handling an animal (and face shield if patient is a cat, ferret or hamster). Don't put your face near the animal's fur or skin.
- **WEAR** a lab coat or gown, mask and gloves when you interact with staff in a space of less than two metres.
- **USE** the same mask for a full shift unless it becomes soiled. Change your gloves and coat or gown between cases if possible. Wash or disinfect hands when changing gloves.
- **ANY TIME** you have concerns, go ahead and change your lab coat, mask or gloves.

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VMC animal attendants, registered veterinary technologists or clinicians are responsible for accessing and returning animals. Meet clients at curbside (outside hospital foyer).

Admission procedures

- **WEAR** lab coat, mask and gloves (and face shield if patient is a cat, ferret or hamster) to meet the client at curbside (outside foyer).
- **WIPE** any kennel or container with disinfectant in the clinic foyer before you enter the reception area. Use your judgment if the animal's condition is critical.
- **CHANGE** your gloves after receiving the pet from the client. Wash or disinfect hands when changing gloves.

Discharge procedures

- **WEAR** lab coat, mask and gloves to meet the client at the door.
- If payment must be received with client:
 - **STAY BEHIND** the shield
 - **WIPE** the handheld payment terminal, pen and other items handled by the client
 - **CHANGE** your gloves. Wash or disinfect hands when changing gloves.

Support each other. We're in this together!