

Client FAQ Fact-Sheet

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a coronavirus and is part of a big family of other types of coronavirus. This is a new strain (type) of coronavirus that appeared in China in people suffering from pneumonia. This has now spread to many other parts of the world.

Why is everyone so worried?

As this is a completely new strain of coronavirus, no-one has met it before. This means we are all potentially susceptible to infection and there is no vaccine available. However, most people who encounter the virus will get only mild signs such as cold or flu like symptoms and a high temperature.

How does COVID-19 spread between people?

Like all other coronaviruses, COVID-19 spreads easily and can survive well outside the body, hence we can catch it from things like door handles. This means indirect transmission of the infection is possible, as it means one human doesn't need to directly contact another to get infected. Some of the infection will spread indirectly through 'fomites' which is the word we give to things that can transfer a virus from one person to another, like a door handle.

How do we stop COVID-19 spreading between people?

The good news is that soap effectively kills the virus. So, the most important thing to do to stop the virus spreading is to wash your hands in soap and water. 20 seconds is the minimum length of time recommended to hand-wash over all surfaces of the hand, this is to ensure sufficient "contact-time" with the soap for it to kill the virus by damaging the outer surface of the virus. Handwashing will significantly reduce the indirect spread between people. Alcohol hand rub will also kill the virus but is no more effective than soap and water.

How do we kill COVID-19 in the environment?

The good news about COVID-19 is that it is relatively easy to kill by normal detergents (soap) and disinfectants so continued good hygiene at our practices will help reduce the spread. The disinfectants being used are those normally and safely used in veterinary practices.

Do animals get coronaviruses?

Coronaviruses are very common in animals and there are many different strains (types) which are different from COVID-19. In general, they normally cause problems like coughing or diarrhoea that are relatively mild.

Do animals get COVID-19?

There have been no confirmed COVID-19 infections in animals. Some coronaviruses are zoonotic which means they can jump from one species to another, for example human to animal or the reverse. There is some suggestion that COVID-19 originated from animals(bats) but this is not yet confirmed.

COVID-19 seems to spread from human to human, not animals.

How do animals contribute to the spread of COVID-19?

At the moment we don't think animals play a significant role in the spread of COVID-19. However, if a person with COVID-19 is in contact with an animal they could potentially spread the virus to another person via the virus being on the coat of the animal. In this situation the animal is a fomite (something that can transfer a virus from one person to another without them having to meet).

Can I get COVID-19 from my pet?

No, but if they have been in touch with someone infected with COVID-19 then there is a slight risk. Make sure you wash your hands before and after feeding/playing with your pet and avoid kissing, licking or sharing food with them

Can animals be vaccinated?

No, we have some vaccines for other types of animal coronaviruses but they are not useful when thinking about COVID-19.

How do we reduce the spread of infection at the practice?

We are encouraging everyone to wash their hands, avoid unnecessary contact with humans and animals who could transfer the virus and disinfecting A LOT!

How do we ensure that we reduce the chance of people getting COVID-19?

We are taking all the precautions advised to ensure we don't spread the COVID-19 virus. You will be/have been asked some questions before coming to the practice and we will help you limit your possible exposure.