



Coronavirus and COVID-19 Update

Until advised otherwise, Vaxi Vet is operating as normal – here are some guidelines to help both humans and animals stay safe and healthy.

If your pet needs veterinary attention and:

- You have been overseas within the last 14 days
- You're experiencing symptoms
- Need to self-isolate

Please phone your vet for advice so that they can make a plan and PLEASE inform your vet prior to them entering your home or you entering their clinic.

In line with social distancing recommendations, all house calls performed by VAXI VET will be conducted outside of the home (eg. backyard).

- Please limit the number of people presenting your pet to just one owner

Make sure that you phone ahead to order required prescription medicine repeats or food, worming and flea control in advance so we can arrange to have them ready for you without the need to wait.

Vets around Australia are working hard to ensure we can continue to provide veterinary care.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation. This situation is rapidly evolving, and we will provide updates as required.

Coronavirus and COVID-19

Coronaviruses (CoV) are common in animals and humans. Some strains can be transmitted between animals and humans (zoonotic), while other strains cannot. The CoV which causes COVID-19 can cause a range of symptoms including fever, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, fatigue, aches and pains, headaches, and runny / stuffy nose.

Are animals the source for COVID-19 in people?

Human to human transmission is the predominant route of COVID-19 transmission. Whilst evidence suggests that COVID-19 emerged from an animal source, investigations are still underway to explain the original route of transmission from an animal source to humans.

Can COVID-19 be transmitted from humans to animals?

COVID-19 is now widely spread in the human population. There have been two dogs (in Hong Kong) known to have tested positive for COVID-19 after contact with humans who tested positive. As it stands, there is limited evidence to suggest that animals infected by humans are playing a significant role in the spread of COVID-19. These dogs were not showing any clinical signs of the disease and it is important to stress that there is still no scientific evidence demonstrating that dogs have played a role in the spread of human COVID-19, certainly not in Australia in that regard. To date, human outbreaks have largely been driven by person to person contact, hence the importance of social distancing.

Can COVID-19 be transmitted from cats and dogs to humans?

There has been no evidence to suggest that cats and dogs can be a primary source of infection to humans or other animals. This pandemic is being spread from human to human with no evidence that pets are playing a role in the transmission.

What precautionary measures should I take to prevent getting sick from COVID-19?

There have been no reports of companion animals with clinical signs of COVID-19 and there is currently no evidence to suggest that companion animals play a significant role in human COVID-19. You can catch COVID-19 if you have been exposed to an infected human. To protect yourself and your pets, practice precautionary hygiene measures including thoroughly washing your hands with soap, frequent use of hand sanitisers, keeping at a distance from people (especially those who are feeling unwell), and wearing a face mask where appropriate.

What precautionary measures should I take if I become ill with COVID-19?

It is still recommended that people who become ill with COVID-19 take precautionary measures by limiting contact with their pets - this may mean wearing a face mask, more frequent hand washing before and after being around or handling your pet, their food and supplies, and also avoiding sharing food with them and no close cuddles with them for a while. If you are under medical attention for COVID-19 and where possible, try and have another member of the household care for your pet.

How to keep your pet healthy during lock-downs and restrictions

Try and keep your pets vaccinations and parasite prevention (fleas, ticks and worms) up to date where possible. If you suspect your pet is unwell (eg. not their self, off their food, diarrhoea, vomiting, crying in pain), phone your vet and they can give you the best advice. If we go into complete lock-down or you need to self-isolate for 14 days, plan ahead by ensuring you have at least two weeks of pet food and any regular medications on hand.

Boredom busters for dogs

- Treasure hunting - hide treats around the house - just make sure you remember where you hide them!
- Teach your pet new commands - you may have 14 days to do this! Remember to use positive re-enforcement (phrases like good boy/girl, and offer treats!) and do not punish your dog if they do not understand the commands you are teaching them.
- Find three plastic cups and turn them upside-down on the floor. Hide a treat under one of the cups and move the cups around each other, allowing your dog to watch the cup movements. See if your dog can identify which cup has the treat.

Boredom busters for cats

- Treasure hunting - as for dogs, hiding treats around the house allows your cat to 'hunt'.
- Train your cat - yes, you can teach a cat tricks (if they have the patience!). Use positive reinforcement for good behaviour like using a litter tray or coming for their food when being called.
- Cubby houses - have you got boxes lying around? Cut breathing holes in the box, turn them upside down and allow your cat to hide and seek. Connect boxes together and make tunnels for them.
- Scratch posts - help prevent furniture from being scratched and give cats the opportunity to scratch a particular post instead.

References:

Australian Veterinary Association

Qld Government - symptoms of novel coronavirus (COVID-19)

World Organisation for Animal Health