

COVID-19: companion animals and self-isolation

There is **no evidence** of companion or farm animals, developing COVID-19, and no evidence they can transmit the infection to humans or other animals. However, animals could act as fomites (carriers) of the virus from one locality to another, so a cautious approach is still suggested.

We advise to thoroughly wash hands before and after interactions with your pets or farm animals, and when handling food, supplies or equipment they might come in contact with. Try to limit close contact, e.g. hugging, or letting your pets touch/lick your face or sleep on beds.

Due to recent development regarding COVID-19 we are implementing pragmatic measures to minimize the risk to our staff and clients. We have reduced our routine consultations and operations and will be prioritising emergency or critical cases. We are also offering telemedicine consults where appropriate to do so. It is likely that we will delay any non-urgent or routine consultations you may have had booked in for your animal.

We have collection drawers in our porch where all dispensed medication will be held. Please find your medication in the draw indicated by your surname. There will be a blank bank transfer slip attached to your dispensed medication that we ask you to complete at the time of collection. There is an envelope secured to the door to leave the completed transfer slips in.

For owners in self-isolation:

- Make sure you have adequate supplies of food and medication for your pets.
- Should you need to arrange more or collect medication you **must call us** first (27366) so we can dispense the medication. If you are self-isolating you will need to arrange someone who is not a member of your isolating household to collect the medication from our collection drawers located in the porch.
- If your animal does require urgent veterinary attention, **contact us in advance** of them arriving at the clinic and inform us they are coming from a household where someone is self-isolating so we can take appropriate precautions to minimize the risk to our staff and clients.
- If you are self-isolating but a face to face consult or emergency treatment is needed, please ask someone else to present the animal to the clinic on your behalf but please be available by phone so we can contact you if necessary.
- Don't remove pets from your property (e.g. send to family, friends or Mucky Paws cattery/kennels), if they have interacted with you since you started self-isolation.

Where we DO feel we need to examine your animal we may ask you to do one or more of the following:

- Wait outside in the car park
- Consider wearing disposable gloves
- Drop your animal into the porch and wait in the car while we examine it

For farm owners and staff:

- If you need an urgent visit, please inform the clinic, so we can arrange to meet. Please ensure someone else is available to assist the veterinarian on your behalf if you are self-isolating and/or unable to attend the visit. Please be available by phone in case more information is required from you at the time of the visit.
- If required to interact with your animals, then practice sensible hygiene measures, e.g. thorough hand washing before and after contact with any animals.
- Don't remove animals that might have been exposed to at-risk people from the property until the self-isolation period is over.

Please be mindful the self-isolation requirements have affected the veterinary clinic. Therefore, we need to prioritise the most urgent cases ahead of routine appointments, due to reduced staff capacity. Please understand we will be doing our utmost to maintain the wellbeing of your animals during this time.