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# THE HUMANITARIAN

SASKATCHEWAN SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

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**SASKATCHEWAN  
SPCA**



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Call 1.877.382.7722  
or [info@saskspca.ca](mailto:info@saskspca.ca)

## AGM: Save the Date

The Saskatchewan SPCA's 2020 Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday, September 26. The location and time is to be determined. This event is open to the public.

More information will be available in future editions of *The Humanitarian* and online at [www.saskspca.ca](http://www.saskspca.ca).

# GET YOUR OWN SASKATCHEWAN SPCA LICENCE PLATE!



The Saskatchewan SPCA's specialty licence plates are available at SGI Motor Licence Issuers throughout the province. Visit your local issuer and order a plate of your very own! Plates are available in the regular number sequence (A0000-A9999) or you can customize with your own phrase.

**\$27 from the sale of every licence plate sold directly supports the work of the Saskatchewan SPCA.**

Learn more at [www.saskspca.ca/licence-plates](http://www.saskspca.ca/licence-plates)

# THANK YOU, SHELTER WORKERS!

The last few months have demonstrated the resourcefulness of animal shelters across the province. Despite the uncertainty and confusion created by COVID-19, the staff at SPCAs and Humane Societies have continued to provide quality care to the homeless dogs and cats at their facilities.

There are 15 SPCAs and Humane Societies providing shelter services to Saskatchewan communities. Some are smaller, volunteer-operated facilities, while others are larger organizations offering various types of animal care-related programs. Animal shelters were declared a critical public service by the Province of Saskatchewan earlier this year.

In March, shelters closed their doors to the public in an effort to protect their staff from possible disease transmission. With declining revenue from fundraising events and donations, some shelters were forced to cut programs and lay off staff.

SPCAs and Humane Societies reached out to their local communities, asking for people to adopt or foster a shelter animal. People responded in a big way. Amy McLean, Operations Manager at the Swift Current SPCA, reports that their adoption rate is nearly triple that of last year. "With people staying at home, they were looking for companionship and decided that this was a good time to try pet ownership," says McLean.

The Estevan Humane Society quickly revised their adoption procedures to minimize potential health risks. Potential

adopters were asked to complete the necessary forms, posted on the shelter website, and then mail them to the shelter. Staff then scheduled an appointment for the person to come to the shelter to pick up their new pet, explains Manager Michaela Pho.

At the Yorkton SPCA, public entry to the shelter was by appointment only. All visitors had to log in, providing their name and phone number for tracking purposes in case they later became ill with COVID-19. "We're here to care for animals but we also have a responsibility to protect the health and safety of humans, too," says Manager Joan Kobylko.

## Think outside the box

While the pandemic has been a stressful time for shelters, it has also been a time for innovation and growth. Graham Dickson, Executive Director of the Saskatoon SPCA, explains that the past few weeks have provided a valuable opportunity to evaluate the services they provide and consider new ways to promote animal welfare. "Looking forward, we hope to get more involved with the public and do more outside the walls of the shelter," says Dickson.

Many shelters had to cancel major fundraising events due to the COVID-19 physical distancing protocols. The shelters quickly brainstormed alternate ideas. The Battlefords Humane Society raised over \$10,000 with their XDream Sleepover fundraiser in which staff and special guests slept in the shelter dog kennels.

The Flin Flon/Creighton and Area SPCA launched a cash draw raffle. "Normally we would have sold tickets in person for this raffle," says Shelter Manager Gail Neufeld. "Instead we are doing this all online."

Some shelters, like the Weyburn Humane Society, came up with creative ways to help people and animals during the pandemic. "We received a number of calls from individuals who wanted to surrender their pets due to financial reasons," says Shelter Manager/Director Colleen Morrice. "We were not able to take the pets in but we were able to help by providing pet food for their owners."

With fewer animals in the shelters, some SPCAs and Humane Societies have been able to do additional cleaning and maintenance work. Staff are repainting walls at the Battlefords Humane Society as part of an experiment on the impact of colour. The indigo blue and light green will promote a sense of calmness and relaxation among the dogs. The colour of items such as bedding and staff T-shirts will be chosen based on the needs of the animal. For example, yellow bandanas may promote playfulness in dogs, while red and orange might be used to energize them.

Staff are looking forward to seeing the results of this experiment. "Any shelter can do a project like this. Get some paint, ask for donations from the community," says Shelter Manager Michelle Spark. "We are using this time to better our shelter."

## A unique and (very) essential service

As Saskatchewan slowly and cautiously begins the lengthy process of emerging from the COVID-19 quarantine, it is important to acknowledge the work of the animal shelters across the province. SPCAs and Humane Societies have been working quietly behind the scenes, continuing to provide compassionate care for homeless pets.

From all of us at the Saskatchewan SPCA, thank you to all shelter workers for the essential services you provide.

## You can help

Animal shelters across the province need your help now more than ever. If you are able, consider a donation of cash or supplies to your local SPCA or Humane Society. Visit [www.saskspca.ca/animal-welfare-organizations](http://www.saskspca.ca/animal-welfare-organizations) for a full list.

**Thank you to all the SPCA and Humane Society shelters serving the province!**



# COVID-19 AND ANIMALS

## IS THERE A RISK OF ANIMALS SPREADING COVID-19?

According to the World Organisation for Animal Health, there is no evidence to suggest that animals infected by humans are playing a role in the spread of COVID-19. The current spread of this disease is a result of human-to-human transmission and is an area that continues to be studied.

### PETS AND COVID-19

There have been several reports of infected humans spreading the virus to their dog or cat. It is still not clear how often this happens and under what circumstances. From the limited information available, it appears that some animals can get sick. A small number of laboratory studies suggest that cats, dogs, ferrets, and hamsters can be infected with COVID-19.

#### How to keep your pets safe

**It is important to remember that pets are not the source of the virus** but are contracting the virus via human-to-animal transmission. Pet owners should abide by the following recommendations if they are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms or if they are self-isolating due to contact with a case of COVID-19.

In these circumstances avoid close contact with your animals. Avoid letting your animals lick you, share your food, sit on your lap, and sleep in your bed. Do not snuggle or kiss them. Remember to practice good hygiene. Wash your hands often, especially before and after touching your animals, their food, and supplies. Avoid coughing and sneezing on your animals and avoid touching your face with unwashed hands.

If possible, have another member of your household care for your animals. If this is not possible, always practice good hygiene, as noted above. Restrict your animal's

contact with other people and animals outside your household until your illness is resolved or you are no longer required to quarantine by the Saskatchewan Health Authority. Be sure to keep your cats indoors at all times and keep your dogs on a leash or within a private fenced area when you take them outside to go to the bathroom.

**Pets contribute to our overall happiness and well-being, especially in times of stress.** If you do not have symptoms of COVID-19 and are not self-isolating, taking walks with your dog or spending time with your pet can help keep both you and your pet healthy.

#### Caring for exposed animals

Pets are not thought to be playing an important role in the spread of this disease. However, if you are caring for a pet that has been exposed to someone with COVID-19, it is recommended that precautions be taken for 14 days after the last possible exposure to the human case. Follow the recommendations in the previous section regarding contact and hygiene and frequently clean and disinfect any surfaces that have high animal contact.



If possible, the animal should remain in their own home in order to minimize contact with any new people, animals, or environments.

If the pet owner lives alone and needs to be hospitalized, an animal may require temporary shelter at a new location such as a veterinary clinic, animal shelter, boarding facility, or a new household. In these cases, the animal should be confined to one area in order to minimize contact with other people and animals.

Individuals at higher risk for severe COVID-19 illness should avoid being temporary caregivers to exposed animals.

### LIVESTOCK AND COVID-19

To date, there have not been any reports of livestock being infected or getting sick with COVID-19. Early information from a small number of studies suggests pigs, chickens, and ducks are not susceptible to the virus. The susceptibility of other livestock species is currently unknown. This is an area that continues to be studied and more information is anticipated.

#### How to protect your livestock

Producers should have business continuity plans to deal with the COVID-19 situation. Industry associations could be a helpful resource for farmers as they develop or revise their business continuity plans.

Livestock producers should follow normal biosecurity measures as always, particularly if they have COVID-19 symptoms or they are self-isolating due to contact with a COVID-19 case.

Producers should limit access to their premises of all non-essential people and specifically exclude people who have travelled abroad in the last 14 days, are ill, especially with symptoms of COVID-19, or have been in close prolonged contact with a confirmed or suspected case in the last 14 days.

# ND ANIMALS

## READING COVID-19 TO PEOPLE?



Livestock producers should consult with the Saskatchewan Health Authority regarding workers without symptoms (asymptomatic) who have had close prolonged contact with a COVID-19 case, or people with symptoms of COVID-19.

If possible, have another person care for your animals while you are sick or self-isolating. If this is not possible, ensure you follow basic infection prevention and control measures such as practicing safe respiratory etiquette, minimizing your direct contact with animals, putting on clean clothes before going out to the barn, and always washing your hands before and after touching animals, their food, and supplies.

These measures are basic practices to prevent transmission of diseases between humans and animals and are recommended as a precaution.

If you have concerns, seek professional advice from your veterinarian or the Saskatchewan Health Authority.

For more information regarding on-farm disease prevention, producers are encouraged to consult the National Farm-Level Biosecurity Planning Guide and the National Biosecurity Standards and Biosecurity Principles.

### **TESTS FOR COVID-19 IN ANIMALS**

Testing animals for COVID-19 is generally not recommended, as the virus is mainly spread from person-to-person and not through contact with animals.

If your animal develops illness following exposure to a COVID-19 case, or a person with COVID-19 symptoms, call your veterinarian so they can assess the situation and determine if your animal needs to be seen. Your veterinarian can also help to determine if your animal has another more common disease or condition.

*Adapted from [www.canadianveterinarians.net](http://www.canadianveterinarians.net) | Updated May 12, 2020*

# COVID-19: IMPACTING YOUR PETS AND THEIR CARE

By Meaghan R. West, RVT

## How does COVID-19 affect pets?

While there have been cases of COVID-19 infecting pets and causing illness, these are exceptional cases and not something that pet owners in Saskatchewan should consider an active risk. The positive cases have occurred in areas with higher population density, and subsequently higher COVID-19 case numbers, such as New York. These cases are examples of COVID-19 being transmitted by humans to animals. Currently, there is no evidence that animals can transmit COVID-19 to humans. This makes sense when you consider that our pets do not typically go anywhere without being accompanied by their owners.

There are tests available for animals but current guidelines restrict their use to pets that are symptomatic, have had other infections ruled out, and are living with a human who has tested positive for COVID-19.

Non-medical issues are a larger concern with pets during the COVID-19 pandemic. More people are working, or attending school, from home and consequently pets are no longer left alone. While this seems great in the short term, it can set pets up for behavioural issues in the future. Spending so much time at home may seem like the perfect time to bring home a new pet; however, the additional time spent together can create the conditions for the development of behavioural issues such as separation anxiety in the future. Online training classes, trainer consultations, and developing a routine that includes time alone are all excellent ways to lay a good foundation for a healthy pet.

## How does COVID-19 affect your vet clinic?

Veterinary clinics in Saskatchewan were declared essential services and local clinics remained open for business. However, many changes were made to keep staff, clients, and patients safe. These changes are based on the number of staff, the size of the building, availability of supplies, and the medical urgency of the visit. Vet clinics are typically small businesses with a small staff that have overlapping shifts, and work in tight quarters as exam rooms and surgery suites do not allow for adequate physical distancing. If one staff member were to test positive, chances are that all the staff would be required to isolate.

Personal protective equipment (PPE) is used regularly in veterinary medicine. Surgical gloves, exam gloves, and procedure masks are all used daily. Early in the pandemic, supplies from veterinary medicine were diverted to the human medicine supply chain. As companies catch up with production, veterinary clinics have needed to ensure that there is enough on hand to keep staff and patients safe. This has been a factor in postponing non-urgent procedures.

Many medications are used in both human and veterinary medicine. Although medication shortages are currently not an issue, it is a factor that is being closely monitored by both sides to ensure that it does not become a problem.

## How will your vet visit change?

Expect to not stay with your pet. Whether you are allowed inside the waiting area, or if your clinic is functioning with car side pick-up, limiting contact with clinic staff means your pet will be ferried between you and the medical team.

You might need to book a later appointment. Non-urgent appointments may be booked for a later date as the pandemic progresses. With limited staff, appointment time also is limited, urgent cases need to be prioritized. Appointment times for evenings or weekends may not be offered in order to keep staff safe.

## Can the vet just send home medication?

The short answer is probably not. In order to prescribe medication, a valid VCPR (veterinary-client-patient-relationship) needs to exist. This includes a hands-on exam of the patient. Even with a valid VCPR, many conditions require veterinarians to be able to see, feel, or smell what is going on with your pet. Diagnostic tests also require specialized equipment and skills to be able to treat patients safely and effectively. Telemedicine, with the supplement of photos and video from owners, can be an option in certain cases but is typically not a valid replacement for in-person examination.

## When will it go back to normal?

Until the prescribed provincial government regulations regarding physical distancing during the pandemic, or a vaccine for COVID-19 becomes available, the extra precautions will remain. As outlined above, veterinary clinics are not ideal for effective physical distancing practices, and need to work in conjunction with human medicine when it comes to PPE and medication supply chains. Your veterinary team bases their decisions on available scientific evidence as well as the recommended restrictions of the provincial veterinary association.



# NEW RESOURCE HELPS VICTIMS OF INTIMATE PARTNER AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

Three provincial organizations have coordinated on the development of an educational guide for the victims of intimate partner and family violence.

The Getting Out Guide is based on the experiences of people who have left violent and abusive relationships and are now living violence-free lives, and the knowledge of those who provide support and services to people dealing with abuse and violence in their lives. Topics addressed in the Guide include recognizing the signs of abusive behaviour, using technology safely, and developing a plan to leave a violent situation.

The Guide was developed by STOPS to Violence, the Provincial Association of Transition Houses and Services of Saskatchewan (PATHS), and the Saskatchewan SPCA.

PATHS Executive Director Jo-Anne Dusel notes that the release of this Guide is especially timely during a time of increased isolation as people are being advised to stay at home if possible. However, in a violent household, this may be a very dangerous option.

"We want people to know that if home is not safe, there are safe places to go," says Dusel. "Domestic violence shelters are still open."

The Guide provides information on how to access shelters and other community supports for the victims of intimate partner and family violence.

Abuse can affect anyone, regardless of age, gender or sexual identity, culture, or income. In a violent home, animals are also at risk.

Animals may suffer directly from neglect or other forms of cruelty. As well animals can be used as a tool for the abuser to control and punish the victim.

"Research shows that the victims of intimate partner and family violence may stay in a dangerous situation rather than leave without their pets," says Sandra Anderson, Program Director at the Saskatchewan SPCA.

Print copies of the Guide will be distributed to front line service providers in Saskatchewan. The Guide is also available, free of charge, at [www.violencelink.ca/GO](http://www.violencelink.ca/GO). Remember that abusive partners commonly monitor their victim's communications. Do not share, tag, text,

direct message, or email sensitive information to a friend unless you know it is safe to do so.

The development of the Getting Out Guide has been made possible with the support of the Ministry of Justice, PrairieAction Foundation, and Signature Print-It (Regina).





**SASKATCHEWAN  
SPCA  
CONFERENCE**

## 2020 CONFERENCE POSTPONED

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 Saskatchewan SPCA Conference has been postponed. Updated information will be available in future editions of *The Humanitarian* and online at [www.saskspca.ca/conference](http://www.saskspca.ca/conference).

## BE PREPARED WITH THE PET EMERGENCY INFORMATION SHEET

The Saskatchewan SPCA urges you to plan ahead and prepare by filling out the Pet Emergency Information Sheet on the back of this page.

The info sheet provides an easy-to-follow overview of important information that you can share with someone who may need to look after your pet in the event that you are unable to. Once you fill out the form, post it inside your home in a highly visible location such as the fridge door.

You can also download additional copies of the Pet Emergency Information Sheet on our website: [www.saskspca.ca/emergency](http://www.saskspca.ca/emergency).

# Pet Emergency Information Sheet

## Pet's Information



Pet's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Breed: \_\_\_\_\_  Male  Female  Spayed/Neutered

Microchip/Tattoo #: \_\_\_\_\_ Licence #: \_\_\_\_\_

Vaccinations Up-to-Date  Records Attached or Located: \_\_\_\_\_



## Owner's Information



Owner's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street City/Town Prov Postal Code

Other Contacts: \_\_\_\_\_

## Feeding Information



Brand/Type: \_\_\_\_\_

Feeding Schedule/Quantity (i.e. 1 cup of food at 9:00 a.m.; 1 cup of food at 5:00 p.m.):

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## Medical Information



Veterinary Clinic: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street City/Town Prov Postal Code

Medical Conditions, Medications & Treatment:

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