



Eric J. Holcomb, Governor
Bret D. Marsh, DVM, State Veterinarian

INDIANA STATE BOARD OF ANIMAL HEALTH

Office of the State Veterinarian
Discovery Hall, Suite 100
1202 East 38th Street
Indianapolis, IN 46205-2898
Phone: 317/544-2400

ANIMAL HEALTH ADVISORY **Testing of Pets for Coronavirus (COVID-19)** (09 April 2020)

SARS-Cov-2 is a novel (new) coronavirus that causes coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. Human patients with COVID-19 have experienced mild to severe respiratory illness, including fever, cough and shortness of breath. While much is currently unknown about this organism, no evidence suggests that pets can spread COVID-19 to humans.

Testing Companion Animals for SARS-CoV-2

Because no specific treatment or cure exists for COVID-19, a positive laboratory test for COVID-19 would not change an animal's treatment plan. Furthermore, because testing resources are limited and require use of already-scarce supplies needed for pandemic response, testing will be approved only on a special, case-by-case basis.

The decision on whether to approve testing will be made collaboratively between the State Veterinarian and the State Public Health Veterinarian. Animal testing for COVID-19 will only be approved if both officials agree it is necessary to protect the health of vulnerable human or animal populations.

A licensed veterinarian must make the request to the Indiana State Board of Animal Health (BOAH).

If testing is approved, animal owners will incur the financial costs of COVID-19 testing in animals.

Veterinarians should continue to provide appropriate symptomatic and supportive care to animals showing clinical signs of respiratory illness.

Guidance on Handling Pets Exposed to COVID-19

Although no pets have been reported sick with COVID-19 in the United States, the current recommendation is:

People ill with COVID-19 should limit contact with animals until more information is known about the virus.

- When possible, another member of the household should care for the pet.
- If possible, the infected person should avoid contact with the pet, including petting, snuggling, being kissed or licked, and sharing food.
- If an infected person must care for the pet while sick, he/she should wash their hands before and after interacting with animals.
- The State Board of Animal Health has pet owner guidance in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

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