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Corona virus disease (COVID-19)

National helpline number – Rajasthan- 0141-2225634

Corona viruses (CoV) are a large family of viruses that cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS-CoV). Corona virus disease (COVID-19) is a new strain that was discovered in 2019 and has not been previously identified in humans (source WHO <https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus>).

The new coronavirus was identified after notification of pneumonia cases of unknown cause in December 2019, diagnosed initially in the Chinese city of Wuhan, capital of Hubei province. In January 2020, the WHO temporarily named the new virus as 2019 novel corona virus (2019- nCoV). However, on Feb 11th it was definitively named SARS – COV- 2 and diseases caused by this virus was named Corona virus disease 2019 (COVID-19) (WSAVA [wsava.org](http://www.wsva.org)).

Zoonotic potential

Corona viruses are zoonotic, meaning they are transmitted between animals and people. Detailed investigations found that SARS-CoV was transmitted from civet cats to humans and MERS-CoV from dromedary camels to humans. Several known corona viruses are circulating in animals that have not yet infected humans (source WHO <https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus>). Two pet dogs of a corona virus patients in Hong Kong were confirmed to be infected with the disease (weak positive), in a likely case of human to animal transmission (TOI, Mar 5, 2020 OIE www.oie.int). However there is no evidence that dog can spread the disease.

Disease spread

Respiratory droplets of infected people, touching a surface or object that has been infected the virus and then touches his own mouth, nose or eyes.

Common signs in humans

Respiratory symptoms, fever, cough, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties. In more severe cases, infection can cause pneumonia, severe acute respiratory syndrome, kidney failure and even death (source WHO <https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus>). These symptoms may appear anywhere between 2-14 days after getting infected.

Advisory for pet/service animal owners and animal lovers

1. Maintain good hygiene
2. Quarantine and monitor closely the pets especially dogs and cats of patients suspected/found positive for Coronaviruse.
3. Restrict contact with pets and other animals while you are sick or suspected with COVID 19.
4. Only one healthy adult person should accompany pet to Veterinary hospital if emergency.
5. Do not panic and need not to abandon your pets. There is no evidence to suggest that pets can spread COVID-19 to other people or other pets.
6. No vaccine is currently available in any market for respiratory corona virus infection in dogs or any other domestic animals.

7. Veterinarian should not use commercially available corona vaccine in the face of the current outbreak thinking that there may be some form of cross protection against COVID – 19.
8. Identify another person in your household who is willing and able to care for your pet in your home if in case you come in contact with COVID – 19 infection (AVMA).
9. Make sure you have an emergency kit prepared, with at least 2 weeks worth of your pet's food and any needed medications.
10. If you are sick with COVID 19 or any other communicable disease, you should stay at home, minimizing contact with other persons and animals, until you are well.
11. Accordingly, if there is a non- urgent appointment (eg. routine vaccinations, annual health checkups, elective surgeries) that needs to be scheduled for your pet or service animal you should wait to schedule that appointment.
12. If you are sick with COVID – 19 and you believe your pet or service animal is ill , please seek assistance from your veterinarian and public health official to ensure how best your pet or service animal can be appropriately cared for while minimizing risk of transmitting COVID – 19 to other people.
13. For animals that have been recently imported from high risk area, as with any animal introduced into a new environment, recently imported animals should be observed daily for signs of illness. If the animal becomes ill, the animal should be examined by a veterinarian. Call your veterinarian before bringing animal into the clinic and let them know that the animal was imported from an area identified as high- risk for COVID – 19.(ACVM)
14. Any contact with other animals possibly living in the market (i.e. stray dogs , cats, bats, birds, rodents) should be avoided.
15. Precautions should be taken to avoid contact with animal waste or fluids on the soil or surfaces of shops and market facility (OIE www.oie.int).
16. Raw meat, milk or animal organs should be handled with care to avoid potential cross-contamination with uncooked foods (OIE www.oie.int).
17. Meat from healthy livestock that is cooked thoroughly remains safe to eat (OIE www.oie.int).

Role of veterinarian

1. The detection of COVID-19 virus in animals meets the criteria for reporting to the OIE through WAHIS, in accordance with the OIE *Terrestrial Animal Health Code* as an emerging disease (OIE www.oie.int).
2. It is important for veterinary authorities to remain informed and maintain close liaison with public health authorities and those responsible for wildlife, to ensure coherent and appropriate risk communication message and risk management.
3. Can educate people about possible risks involved with live animal and animal product.

Advisory for veterinary hospitals, Institutions and clinics

1. Hospitals to ensure social distancing in their premises.
2. Shorten your working hours and wear protective equipments.
3. Wash hands regularly.
4. Keep at least 2 meter distance from other peoples, avoid contacts like handshaking.
5. Allow only one healthy adult person to accompany the pet.
6. Regularly clean and disinfect door handles, reception counters and any area that people touch
7. Provide hand disinfectant to clients.
8. Put sanitizing hand rub dispensers in prominent place around the work place.
9. Send home all staff that doesn't need to be there and can work from home.
10. Remove all items in waiting room people can touch like magazines, leaflets, coffee machine etc.
11. Prefer contactless payments.
12. Non essential audits of hospitals may be postponed.
13. Hospitals should put up posters etc. to increase awareness amongst visitors on DO's and Don'ts regarding COVID 19.

14. Availability of adequate hand sanitizers and running water as well as soap in the veterinary hospitals and clinics should be ensured.
15. Non essential visits like of veterinary students or pharmaceutical representatives must be avoided.
16. Non essential elective surgeries should be postponed.
17. Entertain only emergency cases and surgeries, say no to regular health checkups and vaccinations.
18. If possible give advice on phone calls for non emergency cases.
19. Ensure trash is removed daily and disposed of safely.
20. For veterinary institutions- Close all educational establishments, postpone classes and exams, give extra staff leave or work from home if possible.
21. Ensure that face masks and paper tissue are available at work places for those who a runny nose or cough at work, along with closed bins for hygienically disposing them.
22. Meetings, as far as feasible, shall be done through video conferencing. Minimize or reschedule meetings involving large number of people unless necessary.

Advisory for students

1. Non essential travel should be avoided.
2. Frequent hand wash with soap, water and alcohol based hand rub.
3. Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth.
4. Wear a mask if you are coughing or sneezing and dispose it properly after use.
5. Practice respiratory hygiene means covering your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze. Then dispose of the used tissue immediately.
6. Do not share your utensils, cups, food or drinks with others.
7. Hygiene and physical distancing has to be maintained. Avoid handshaking and hugging as a matter of greeting.
8. If you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical care early.
9. Stay at home if you begin to feel unwell even with mild symptoms such as headache and slightly runny nose, until you recover.
10. Be supportive, careful, alert and kind.
11. Do not spread and support any rumors. Be informed, prepared, smart and safe.
12. Avoid crowded areas or places where you might interact with people who are sick.
13. Show empathy with those affected.
14. Avoid spitting in public.
15. If you stay at home, maintain healthy lifestyle including proper diet, sleep, exercise, and social contacts with loved ones at home and by e mail and phone with other family and friends


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