Covid 19 Policy and Procedures

Classifying Worker Exposure to SARS-CoV-2

Worker risk of occupational exposure to SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, during an outbreak may vary from very high to high, medium, or lower (caution) risk. The level of risk depends in part on the industry type, need for contact within 6 feet of people known to be, or suspected of being, infected with SARS-CoV-2, or requirement for repeated or extended contact with persons known to be, or suspected of being, infected with SARS-CoV-2. To help employers determine appropriate precautions, OSHA has divided job tasks into four risk exposure levels: very high, high, medium, and lower risk. The Occupational Risk Pyramid shows the four exposure risk levels in the shape of a pyramid to represent probable distribution of risk. Most American workers will likely fall in the

Very High Exposure Risk

Very high exposure risk jobs are those with high potential for exposure to known or suspected sources of COVID-19 during specific medical, postmortem, or laboratory procedures.

High Exposure Risk

High exposure risk jobs are those with high potential for exposure to known or suspected sources of COVID-19.

Medium Exposure Risk

Medium exposure risk jobs include those that require frequent and/or close contact with (i.e., within 6 feet of) people who may be infected with SARS-CoV-2, but who are not known or suspected COVID-19 patients. In areas without ongoing community transmission, workers in this risk group may have frequent contact with travelers who may return from international locations with widespread COVID-19 transmission. In areas where there is ongoing community transmission, workers in this category may have contact with the general public (e.g., schools,

high-population-density work environments, some high-volume retail settings).

Lower Exposure Risk (Caution)

Lower exposure risk (caution) jobs are those that do not require contact with people known to be, or suspected of being, infected with SARS-CoV-2 nor frequent close contact with (i.e., within 6 feet of) the general public. Workers in this category have minimal occupational contact with the public and other coworkers.

Jobs Classified at Lower Exposure Risk (Caution): What to Do to Protect Workers

For workers who do not have frequent contact with the general public, employers should follow the guidance for "Steps All Employers Can Take to Reduce Workers' Risk of Exposure to SARS-CoV-2," on page 7 of this booklet and implement control measures described in this section.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

When selecting PPE, consider factors such as function, fit, decontamination ability, disposal, and cost. Sometimes, when PPE will have to be used repeatedly for a long period of time, a more expensive and durable type of PPE may be less expensive overall than disposable PPE. Each employer should select the combination of PPE that protects workers specific to their workplace.

Workers with medium exposure risk may need to wear some combination of gloves, a gown, a face mask, and/or a face shield or goggles. PPE ensembles for workers in the medium exposure risk category will vary by work task, the results of the employer's hazard assessment, and the types of exposures workers have on the job.

High exposure risk jobs are those with high potential for exposure to known or suspected sources of COVID-19.

Very high exposure risk jobs are those with high potential for exposure to known or suspected sources of COVID-19 during specific medical,

postmortem, or laboratory procedures that involve aerosol generation or specimen collection/handling.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Most workers at high or very high exposure risk likely need to wear gloves, a gown, a face shield or goggles, and either a face mask or a respirator, depending on their job tasks and exposure risks.

Those who work closely with (either in contact with or within 6 feet of) patients known to be, or suspected of being, infected with SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, should wear respirators. In these instances, see the PPE section beginning on page 14 of this booklet, which provides more details about respirators. For the most up-to-date information, also visit OSHA's COVID-19 webpage: www.osha.gov/covid-19.

PPE ensembles may vary, especially for workers in laboratories or morgue/mortuary facilities who may need additional protection against blood, body fluids, chemicals, and other materials to which they may be exposed. Additional PPE may include medical/surgical gowns, fluid-resistant coveralls, aprons, or other disposable or reusable protective clothing. Gowns should be large enough to cover the areas requiring protection. OSHA may also provide updated guidance for PPE use on its website: www.osha.gov/covid-19.

NOTE: Workers who dispose of PPE and other infectious waste must also be trained and provided with appropriate PPE.

The CDC webpage "Healthcare-associated Infections" (www. cdc.gov/hai) provides additional information on infection control in healthcare facilities.

Establishing a Safety and Health Program

Safety and health programs are systems that can substantially reduce the number and severity of workplace injuries and illnesses, while reducing costs to employers.

Visit www.osha.gov/safetymanagement for more information.

- **KidsHealth** /
- **for Parents**
- / Infections That Pets Carry

Infections That Pets Carry

Reviewed by: Stephen C. Eppes, MD

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en español

Infecciones transmitidos por las mascotas

Caring for pets is a great learning experience for kids, teaching them responsibility, gentleness, and respect for other living beings. Like adults, kids can benefit from the companionship, affection, and relationships they share with their pets.

But animals and pets can spread infections to humans, especially kids. So if you're thinking about buying a pet, or already have one, it's important to know how to protect your family from infections.

How Pets Spread Infections

Like people, all animals carry germs. Illnesses common among housepets — such as distemper, canine parvovirus, and heartworms — can't spread to humans.

But pets also carry certain bacteria, viruses, parasites, and fungi that can cause illness if transmitted to humans. Humans get these animal-borne diseases when they're bitten or scratched or have contact with an animal's waste, saliva, or dander.

These diseases can affect humans in many ways. They're of greatest concern to young children, infants, pregnant women, and people whose immune systems have been compromised by illness or disease. Infants and kids younger than 5 years old are at risk because their immune systems are still developing, and some infections that might make an adult just mildly sick can be more serious for them.

Healthy Family, Healthy Pets

But you don't have to give up your family's furry friends either. Pets can enrich your family life, and taking a few precautions can protect your kids from getting sick.

Protecting your family from pet-related infections begins before bringing a pet home. For instance, reptiles and amphibians should not be allowed as pets in any household with infants and young children.

Also consider the health and age of your kids before getting a pet. A pet that would require frequent handling is not recommended for any immunocompromised child

(such as a child who has HIV, has cancer and is undergoing chemotherapy, or uses prednisone frequently). Kids with eczema should probably avoid aquariums.

Dogs and Cats

Dogs and cats are popular pets but can carry infections such as:

- **Campylobacter infection:** can be spread by household pets carrying *Campylobacter jejuni* bacteria, which cause diarrhea, abdominal pain, and fever in people. The bacteria may be in the intestinal tract of infected dogs, cats, hamsters, birds, and certain farm animals. A person can become infected through contact with contaminated water, feces, undercooked meat, or unpasteurized milk.

  More than 2 million cases of campylobacter infection happen each year in the United States, and *C. jejuni* is now the leading cause of bacterial gastroenteritis. These infections are contagious, especially among members of the same family and kids in childcare or preschools. Infection is treated with antibiotics.
- **Cat scratch disease:** can happen when a person is bitten or scratched by a cat infected with *Bartonella henselae* bacteria. Symptoms include swollen and tender lymph nodes, fever, headaches, and tiredness, which usually ease without treatment. However, a doctor may prescribe antibiotics if the infection is severe. Cat scratch disease rarely causes long-term complications.
- **Rabies:** a serious illness caused by a virus that enters the body through a bite or wound contaminated by the saliva from an infected animal. Animals that may carry the rabies virus include dogs, cats, raccoons, bats, skunks, and foxes. Widespread immunization of dogs and cats has decreased the transmission of rabies in these animals and in people. Human rabies is rare in the United States, and a vaccine is available for treatment following a bite from a potentially rabid animal.
- **Rocky Mountain spotted fever (RMSF):** spread by ticks infected by the *Rickettsia ricketsii* bacteria. These ticks are frequently carried by dogs. Symptoms include high fever, chills, muscle aches, and headaches, and a rash that may spread across the wrists, ankles, palms, soles, and trunk of

the body. RMSF, which can be treated with antibiotics, is most common in the south central and the mid-south Atlantic regions of the United States.

- **Ringworm:** a skin infection caused by several types of fungi found in the soil and on the skin of humans and pets. Kids can get ringworm from touching infected animals such as dogs and cats. Ringworm of the skin, or tinea corporis, usually is a dry, scaly round area with a raised red bumpy border and a clear center. When the scalp is affected, the area may be flaky, red, or swollen. Often there are bald patches. Ringworm is treated with antifungal medicines including shampoo, cream, or oral medicine.
- **Toxocariasis:** an illness caused by the parasitic roundworm *Toxocara*, which lives in the intestines of dogs and cats. The eggs from the worms are passed in the feces of dogs and cats, often contaminating soil where kids play. When a child ingests the contaminated soil, the eggs hatch in the intestine and the larvae spread to other organs, an infection known as visceral larva migrans. Symptoms include fever, cough or wheezing, enlarged liver, rash, or swollen lymph nodes. Symptoms may clear up on their own or a doctor may prescribe drugs to kill the larvae. When the larvae in the intestine make their way through the bloodstream to the eye, it is known as *ocular toxocariasis*, or *ocular larva migrans*, which may lead to a permanent loss of vision.
- **Toxoplasmosis:** contracted after contact with a parasite found in cat feces. In most healthy people, toxoplasma infection causes no symptoms. When symptoms do happen, they may include swollen glands, tiredness, muscle pain, fever, sore throat, and a rash. In pregnant women, toxoplasmosis can cause miscarriage, premature births, and severe illness and blindness in newborns. Pregnant women should avoid contact with litter boxes. People whose immune systems have been weakened by illnesses such as HIV or cancer are at risk for severe complications from toxoplasmosis infection.
- **Dog and cat bites:** may become infected and cause serious problems, particularly bites to the face and hands. Cat bites tend to be worse, partly because they are deeper puncture wounds. Significant bites should be washed out thoroughly. Often these bite wounds require treatment in a doctor's office or emergency room; antibiotics are sometimes necessary.

Birds

Pet birds, even if they are kept in a cage, may transmit these diseases:

- **Cryptococcosis:** a fungal disease contracted when someone inhales organisms found in bird droppings, especially from pigeons, that can cause pneumonia. People with weakened immune systems from illnesses such as HIV or cancer are at increased risk of contracting this disease and developing serious complications, such as meningitis.
- **Psittacosis:** also known as parrot fever, a bacterial illness that can happen from contact with infected bird feces or with the dust that builds up in birdcages. Symptoms include coughing, high fever, and headache. It is treated with antibiotics.

Reptiles and Amphibians

Reptiles (including lizards, snakes, and turtles) and amphibians (including frogs, toads, and salamanders) put kids at risk for:

- **Salmonellosis:** Reptiles and amphibians shed *Salmonella* in their feces. Touching the reptile's skin, cage, and other contaminated surfaces can lead to infection. *Salmonellosis* causes symptoms such as abdominal pain, diarrhea, vomiting, and fever. Young children are at risk for more serious illness, including dehydration, meningitis, and sepsis (blood infection).

Other Animals

Handling and caring for rodents — including hamsters and gerbils — as well as fish can place kids at risk for:

- **Lymphocytic choriomeningitis virus (LCMV):** People can get LCMV by inhaling particles that come from urine, feces, or saliva from infected rodents, such as mice and hamsters. LCMV infection can cause flu-like symptoms — fever, tiredness, headaches, muscle aches, nausea, and vomiting — and may even lead to meningitis (an inflammation of the

membrane that surrounds the brain and spinal cord) and encephalitis (an inflammation of the brain). As with most viruses, there is no specific treatment, but some patients might need to be hospitalized. Like toxoplasmosis, LCM may be passed from an infected pregnant woman to her fetus.

- **Mycobacterium marinum:** This infection may happen in people exposed to contaminated water in aquariums or pools. Although *mycobacterium marinum* infections are generally mild and limited to the skin, they can be more severe in people with HIV or weakened immune systems.

Precautions When Adopting or Buying a Pet

If you're adopting or buying a pet, make sure the breeder, shelter, or store has a good reputation and vaccinates all of its animals. A reputable breeder should belong to a national or local breeding club, such as the American Kennel Club. Contact the Humane Society of the United States or your veterinarian for information about animal shelters in your area.

As soon as you choose a family pet, take it to a local veterinarian for vaccinations and a physical exam. Don't forget to routinely vaccinate your pet on a schedule recommended by your vet — this will keep your pet healthy and reduce the risk that infections will spread to your kids.

You'll also want to regularly feed your pet nutritious animal food (ask your vet for suggestions) and provide plenty of fresh water. Avoid feeding your pet raw meat because this can be a source of infection, and do not allow your pet to drink toilet water because infections can be spread through saliva, urine, and feces.

Limit young kids' contact with outdoor pets that hunt and kill for food because a pet that ingests infected meat may get an infection that can be passed to people.

Safely Caring for Your Pet

Here are some tips to help your family safely care for pets:

- Always wash your hands, especially after touching your pet, handling your pet's food, or cleaning your pet's cage, tank, or litter box. Wear gloves when cleaning up after an animal's waste, and if you have a bird, wear a dust mask over your nose and mouth when cleaning the cage to prevent inhaling urine or fecal particles. Don't have kids clean cages or litter boxes unless there is supervision or until they know how to do this safely and responsibly (and again, hands should be washed afterward).
- Avoid kissing or touching your pet with your mouth because infections can spread through saliva. Also, don't share food with your pet.
- Keep your pet's living area clean and free of waste. If your pet eliminates waste outdoors, pick up waste regularly and don't allow kids to play in that area.
- Don't allow pets in areas where food is prepared or handled, and don't bathe your pet or clean aquariums in the kitchen sink or bathtub. Wash your pet outdoors or talk to your veterinarian about professional pet grooming.
- Avoid strange animals or those that appear sick. Never adopt a wild animal as a pet.

Watch kids carefully around pets. Small children are more likely to catch infections from pets because they crawl around on the floor with the animals, kiss them or share food with them, or put their fingers in the pets' mouths and then put their dirty fingers in their own mouths. Also, if kids visit a petting zoo, farm, or a friend's house where there are animals, make sure they know the importance of hand washing.

For your pet's comfort and for your family's safety, control flea and tick problems in your pet. Fleas and ticks can carry diseases that may be easily passed to kids. Oral and topical medicines are available for flea and tick control; avoid using flea collars because kids can handle them and become sick from the chemicals they contain. Check your pet regularly for fleas and ticks, as well as bites and scratches that may make them more open to infection. Keep your pet leashed when outdoors and keep it away from animals that look sick or may be unvaccinated.

And, finally, spay or neuter your pet. Spaying and neutering may reduce your pet's contact with other animals that may be infected, especially if your pet goes outdoors.

Reviewed by: Stephen C. Eppes, MD
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MORE ON THIS TOPIC FOR:

- **Parents**
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Note: All information on KidsHealth® is for educational purposes only. For specific medical advice, diagnoses, and treatment, consult your doctor.

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