

COVID-19 has become top of mind locally and globally as our health and that of our loved ones is threatened. According to the [BC CDC](#), it's unlikely pets can infect people, but pets could be a vector in the same way surfaces or human hands can spread the virus. So people who test positive, or are presumptive positive, should consider giving the care of their animals to a friend or family member while self-isolating. Where this isn't possible, the CDC recommends:

Individuals infected with COVID-19 should limit contact with their pet during their illness. If an infected person must care for animals, then they should wash their hands before and after interacting with their animals, their food and supplies; and their animals should not be exposed to other people.

The the [Government of Canada](#) adds the following:

- avoid close contact with animals during your illness
 - practise good hand-washing and avoid coughing and sneezing on your animals
 - do not visit farms or come in contact with livestock
- limit your animal's contact with other people and animals outside the household until your illness is resolved

(Social distancing may not be something your pooch wants to embrace at the dog park, but keeping pets from different households apart is something to bear in mind as this human health emergency develops.)

While things are fairly normal, make a plan in case you are quarantined or become ill. Arrange for a trusted friend or family member to look after your pet. Put aside necessary supplies: food, treats, bedding, medication, toys. Include a list of instructions to minimize the disruptions to your pet's routine. If you are hospitalized and have no one to care for your pet(s), a member of your local Health Authority can contact CDART to provide pet care/food/supplies/veterinary care as necessary.

CDART usually recommends everyone keep emergency pet supplies sufficient for at least one week on hand in the form of a [Grab and Go bag](#), but to be consistent with the conditions for isolation to contain COVID-19, we now recommend supplies sufficient for 2 weeks or more.

If your pet needs health care, [veterinarians](#) are an [essential service](#), but their office protocols will be modified in order to protect staff and promote public safety. Confirm the new procedures when you phone for an appointment.

As we all continue to chart our way through this storm, remember your pets aren't just furry dependants, they're a source of solace. You need brief outings with your dog as much as your pup needs its walks. [Be safe, stay home](#); use [physical distancing](#) when you must go out.

For more information about the Canadian Disaster Animal Response Team, visit our website, cdart.org

