



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 38<sup>th</sup> 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](#).

###