

¹A brief understanding of the family of viruses called “Coronaviridae”

You may have heard that the “corona” virus is nothing new. It’s true that it’s just the name of a family of viruses: Coronaviridae. Humans get them (like the common cold), and dogs and cats get them too. In fact, your dog may very well have received a vaccine for canine coronavirus as a puppy. The “C” in the vaccination “DAPPC” stands for a coronavirus.

Interestingly, many veterinarians, including myself, don’t vaccinate for this canine strain of coronavirus because it’s a mild, self-limiting disease that doesn’t cause much reason for concern. And this is true of the run-of-the-mill coronaviruses in humans too. They generally cause mild illness.

The most important thing we can do for ourselves, other people,
and our pets: Keep yourself healthy!

This goes back to the concept that flight attendants preach: put the oxygen mask on yourself before you help those around you. This is counterintuitive to a caregiver’s heart, but it makes sense. If you are out of commission, whether it be from hospitalization or just not feeling well enough for your daily walks with your dog, this will have an impact on your dog’s wellbeing.

Out of love for your dog, as well as for fellow humans, please follow the CDC guidelines for keeping yourself as healthy as possible during these tumultuous times. This includes using a [good handwashing technique](#), heeding travel restrictions, practicing responsible social distancing, and using a ton of common sense.

Even with all these preventatives in place, you may be wondering...

If I do get coronavirus, can I infect my dog?

We already know that this disease is zoonotic—meaning it normally exists in animals but can also infect people. For reference, other zoonotic diseases include anthrax, Ebola, and rabies. So, in this case, the key question is just the opposite. Can humans infect animals?

I'm guessing you've seen the news about the Pomeranian dog in Hong Kong who tested a weak positive for COVID-19 on February 28th. Considering that a dog is really a nose on four legs, it's not surprising that this dog, whose owner was infected with the virus, had particles in its nostrils and tested positive. At least that was the original thought.

However, the owner was hospitalized and the dog was placed in quarantine. And at day five and day eight post quarantine, this Pomeranian still tested weak positive. Based on these test results, the conclusion was drawn that the dog was probably actually infected with COVID-19, even though it showed no clinical symptoms.

What does this mean?

Both the CDC and the World Health Organization (WHO) claim there is no current evidence to suggest that dogs can get sick from COVID-19, nor are they involved in the transmission of the disease. However, we have much to learn about this novel virus. In other words, advice is tentative at this point.

When preparing for you and your family, don't forget to keep an extra supply of your dog's food and medications on hand!

¹ <https://toegrips.com/coronavirus-dogs/>