



04/23/20

As you return to offering routine services, please do the following in your veterinary practice to prevent and respond to COVID-19. Person-to-person transmission of the virus is still ongoing and precautions should still be instituted to remain healthy.

Prevention of COVID-19

- Social distancing can be very difficult to do within a clinic setting. As much as feasible keep 6 feet apart when closer contact is not needed for a procedure.
- Wear cloth masks at all times in the work environment and when in public spaces as directed by public health officials. *It is important to note that if both an individual who develops COVID-19 and the person in the clinic exposed to them are wearing masks the entire time, this would not constitute an exposure that will require quarantine.*
- Utilize curb-side service, limiting persons allowed in the waiting room to one at a time or having them wait in the car, and receive payments over the phone.
- Perform frequent handwashing (before and after touching surfaces, animals, using the bathroom, before eating/drinking, before and after touching a mask) for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Utilize the biosecurity guidance in the National Association of State Public Health Veterinarian's Compendium of Veterinary Standard Precautions (see link below).

Environment

Be diligent about cleaning/disinfecting in the practice. Pay particular attention to high touch surfaces (door knobs, toilet handles, phones, light switches, computers, tables, desks). Do not utilize other employee's work spaces.

Staff monitoring

- Underlying conditions
 - Staff with some underlying health conditions such as diabetes, cardiac disease, chronic pulmonary disease, obesity, hypertension or who are immunocompromised may be at increased risk of adverse outcomes from this disease. Consider this when meeting staffing needs.
- Ensure that staff
 - Take their temperatures daily: should be lower than 99.5°F (taken under the arm) or 100°F (taken orally or by temporal thermometer).
 - Self-monitor for symptoms: fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, loss of sense of smell or taste, diarrhea.
 - Wear cloth masks routinely, and eye protection when within 6 feet of another person (optional, but encouraged).

****If an employee has a fever or symptoms of COVID-19, they should be sent home immediately to self-isolate for 14 days****

Staff member testing positive for COVID-19

If a staff member should test positive for COVID-19 they should isolate at home and not return to work for 14 days. Other staff in the clinic should be alerted that a staff member has tested positive for COVID-19. MSDH is performing intensive case and contact investigation around each case and will issue isolation and quarantine orders as indicated. The clinic should contact their local health department for recommendations on additional steps. The MSDH 24-hour hotline number is 877-978-6453.

Determine all the days the staff member worked up to 48 hours prior to symptom onset and after. Identify any other staff that had close contact with the positive staff member. *High risk contacts to a case include persons who have had more than 10 minutes of contact without PPE (mask) within 6 feet of a confirmed case.* These staff members should quarantine at home and not work for 14 days. When potential resource constraints exist, consideration may be given to allowing veterinarians and their staff who are asymptomatic high risk contacts to continue to work if they wear a surgical mask during work and monitor their temperature and symptoms twice daily. This allowance may be dependent on protective equipment utilized, duration of the contact, and how symptomatic the case was during the contact. *The person will still be considered under quarantine and not be allowed to do other things in the community.*

Resources for more information

Mississippi Board of Animal Health: www.mbah.ms.gov

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: www.cdc.gov

American Veterinary Medical Association: www.avma.com

MS State Department of Health: www.healthymms.com

National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians: <http://www.nasphv.org/documentsCompendiaVet.html>