

May 11th, 2020

As the consulting veterinarian for the Barkshire, I felt the need to share some comments about the current status on COVID-19 and its effect on pets, in particular dogs. As you may have read in the news, there have been a select few dogs that have tested positive for the corona virus around the world. At this time there is no scientific evidence to suggest that dogs are susceptible [i.e. develop symptoms] to this disease. Dogs are currently considered to be a “dead end host” which means that the virus cannot replicate and survive in this species. Thus, there is nothing to suggest that there is any dog-to-human transmission. That being said, the AVMA recommends that any person that is sick take similar precautions with their pets [i.e. distancing/minimal contact] to err on the side of caution.

As for pets’ fur acting as a fomite [i.e. objects or materials which are likely to carry infection, such as clothes, pet fur, etc.], the risk is incredibly low. The AVMA’s Chief Veterinary Officer Gail Golab says “We’re not overly concerned about people contracting COVID-19 through contact with dogs and cats.” And there’s science behind that: “The virus survives best on smooth surfaces, such as countertops and doorknobs. Porous materials, such as pet fur, tend to absorb and trap pathogens, making it harder to contract them through touch.”

The Barkshire intends to maintain a safe and clean environment for your fur babies. If there are any additional concerns or questions about COVID-19 in pets, I strongly encourage you to visit the AVMA.org website for the latest scientific information. The media can be a very complicating and confusing news source.

We hope you are all staying safe!

Sincerely

Dr. Laura Besecke