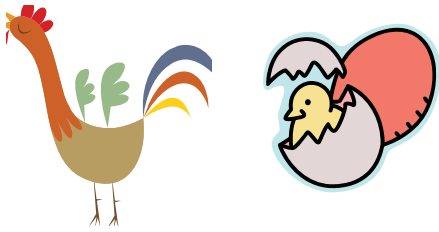


My job involves working with animals. Can I keep my job?

Jobs working with animals (such as jobs in pet stores, animal clinics, farms, and slaughterhouses) carry a risk for infections. Talk with your doctor about whether you should work with animals. People who work with animals should take these extra precautions:

- Follow your worksite's rules to stay safe and reduce risk of infection. Wear personal protective gear, such as coveralls, boots, and gloves.



- While cute, avoid handling young farm animals, especially if they have diarrhea.

Can someone with HIV give it to their pets?

No. HIV can not be spread to, from, or by cats, dogs, birds, or other pets. Many viruses cause diseases that are like AIDS, such as feline leukemia virus, or FeLV, in cats. These viruses cause illness only in a certain animal and cannot infect other animals or humans. For example, FeLV infects only cats. It does not infect humans or dogs.

Are there any tests a pet should have before I bring it home?

A pet should be in overall good health. You don't need special tests unless the animal has diarrhea or looks sick. If your pet looks sick, your veterinarian can help you choose the tests it needs.

What should I do when visiting friends or relatives with pets?

When you visit anyone with pets, take the same precautions you would in your own home. Don't handle animals that may not be healthy. Consider telling your friends and family about the need for these precautions before you plan any visits.

Should children with HIV handle pets?

The same precautions apply for children as for adults. However, children may want to snuggle more with their pets. Some pets, like cats, may bite or scratch to get away from children. Adults should be extra watchful and supervise an HIV-infected child's hand washing to prevent infection.



For more information:



Pets as Companions for Those with HIV

- Yes! You can keep your pets.
- Take a few simple precautions to prevent infections from pets or other animals.
- HIV can not be spread by, or to, cats, dogs, birds, or other pets.

Should I keep my pets?

Yes. Most people with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) can and should keep their pets. Having a pet in your life can be rewarding. Pets can help you feel psychologically and physically better. For many people, pets are more than just animals — they are members of the family. However, you should know the health risks of owning a pet or caring for animals. Animals may carry infections that may be harmful to you. Your decision to own or care for pets should be based on knowing the things which can protect yourself from these infections.

What kinds of infections could I get from an animal?

Animals can carry bacteria, parasites and fungal infections that can cause illnesses like cryptosporidiosis (“crypto”), toxoplasmosis (“toxo”), cat scratch disease, rat bite fever, ringworm and other diseases. These diseases can cause problems like severe diarrhea, brain infections, and skin lesions even among those without HIV.

How can I protect myself from infections spread by animals?

Soap and water, and a little common sense are your best allies in keeping yourself healthy.

- Always wash your hands well with soap and water after playing with or caring for animals—especially before eating or handling food.



- Protect your pet’s health by only feeding it pet food or cooking all meat thoroughly so it isn’t eating raw or undercooked meat. Raw diets increase the risk of *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* infection.
- Give your pet plenty of fresh water so that it won’t be tempted to drink from toilet bowls or stagnant water.

- Animals with diarrhea may need medical attention. If the diarrhea lasts for more than 1 or 2 days, take your pet to your veterinarian and ask him or her to check for infections or other conditions that may cause diarrhea.
- Look for healthy pets that are at least 6 months old. If you are getting a pet from a pet store, animal breeder, or animal shelter (pound), check the sanitary conditions and license of these sources. If you are not sure about the animal’s health, take it to your veterinarian.
- Stray animals can carry many infections that can affect even those without HIV. Follow your common sense. Do not handle stray or feral animals because you could get scratched or bitten.*
- Animal droppings (stool) may contain bacteria that can harm your health and that of your pet. Don’t ever handle the stool of any animal or allow your pets to hunt or eat another animal’s droppings.
- Ask someone who is not infected with HIV or pregnant to change your cat’s litter box daily. If you do it yourself, wear vinyl or household cleaning gloves and immediately wash your hands well with soap and water.



- Your pet knows you care for it, but avoid letting your pet lick your mouth, open cuts or wounds.
- Trim their nails on a regular basis.
- Show your love for your pet by holding it and speaking to it gently, however don’t kiss your pet.
- Help your pets stay healthy, by ensuring they do not have fleas. Fleas can carry cat scratch disease.
- Reptiles such as snakes, lizards, and turtles are not the best choices for those with HIV because they carry *Salmonella*. If you touch any reptile, immediately wash your hands well with soap and water.



- Exotic pets such as monkeys, and ferrets, or wild animals such as raccoons, lions, bats, and skunks are not the best pet choices.
- Wear vinyl or household cleaning gloves when you clean aquariums or animal cages and wash your hands well right after you finish.

*If you are bitten, you should seek medical advice.