

# VISITING ANIMALS IN PUBLIC SETTINGS

Fairs, Petting Zoos, Farms, Flea Markets, Pet Stores

## General Tips:

- Keep hands away from face while in animal areas (e.g. no smoking, thumb-sucking or use of pacifiers, baby bottles, spill-proof cups)
- Make sure children are adequately supervised
- Do not bring carriages, strollers or toys into animal enclosures
- Do not allow animals to nuzzle or lick children's faces
- Do not eat or drink while in the animal areas
- Do not eat or drink unpasteurized dairy products or ciders

## What to do if an animal bites or scratches:



**Rabies is a serious concern.** If anyone is bitten or scratched by an animal they should seek immediate medical attention and report the incident to Durham Region Health Department at 905-668-2020 or 1-800-841-2729.

## Tips for using hand sanitizers (when water is not available)

- Remove any visible dirt on hands with moist hand wipes and let hands dry
- Apply a sufficient amount of hand sanitizer – enough that hands stay wet for at least 15 seconds
- Choose a hand sanitizer that contains 70-90% alcohol
- Check the expiry date
- Supervise children at all times when using hand sanitizers

## During your visit...

Practise good hand hygiene

- Before eating, preparing food or drinking
- Immediately upon leaving animal areas
- After touching or feeding animals
- After touching animal cages, barriers or bedding
- After cleaning and/or removing boots or shoes



HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Durham Health Connection Line  
905-668-2020 or 1-800-841-2729

[durham.ca/childcare](https://www.durham.ca/childcare)



If you require this information in an accessible format, contact 905-668-2020 or 1-800-841-2729



Visiting animals at petting zoos, fairs or farms can be a fun and educational experience. However, it is important to remember that germs can be spread from animals to people if simple precautions are not followed. Before planning your trip, review the following information with children, parents, and supervisors.

## Animals of concern

Recent outbreaks in Canada and the United States have been associated with cows, goats, sheep, pigs, rodents, birds, reptiles and amphibians. Extra caution should be taken around any young animals, especially to calves, baby chicks and ducks.



## Which germs are typically spread from animals to people?

Some of the most common germs that can be spread from animals to people include E. coli, Salmonella, Campylobacter, ringworm and influenza.

When people become ill after contact with animals or animal enclosures their symptoms can include:

- Diarrhea
- Stomach cramps
- Bloody diarrhea
- Bloating
- Nausea
- Gas
- Vomiting
- Fever
- Cough

Anyone experiencing any of these symptoms within one month after visiting animals in a public setting should seek medical attention.

## Who is at more risk

- Pregnant women
- The elderly
- Children under five years of age
- People who are mentally impaired, with weakened immune systems, with asthma or animal allergies

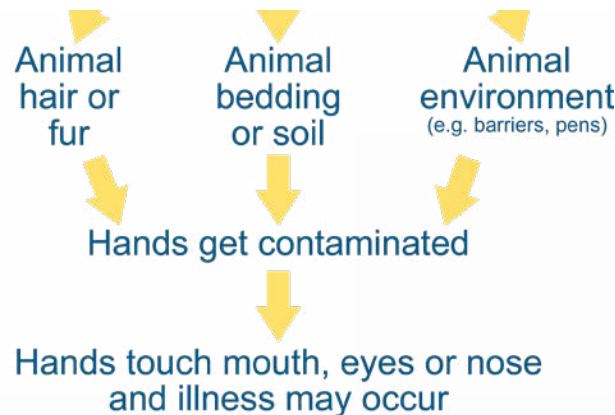
It is recommended that people at risk avoid contact with animals in public settings.

Remember – all children should be supervised by adults while in the presence of animals.

## How do diseases spread from animals to people?

Animals that carry disease-causing germs can 'shed' the germs into their environment even when they don't appear ill. Animals often carry germs in their guts and they can pass these germs to people through their feces in the following ways:

### Animal feces gets onto...



Animals can also carry germs in their noses and mouths/beaks and they can pass these germs when they nuzzle or lick people's hands or faces.

## Hand hygiene - the key to prevention

Improper or inadequate hand hygiene has been one of the main causes of outbreaks linked with animals in public settings. Proper hand hygiene is the best way to reduce the spread of disease.

**Make hand hygiene a priority!**

## Before your visit...

Find out if the facility you are visiting has:

- Handwashing facilities that are accessible to both children and adults – supplied with running water, liquid soap and paper towels
- Hand sanitizer and moist hand wipes
- Adequate staff supervision in the areas where animal contact is permitted
- An eating area that is separate from the animal area

Review correct hand hygiene procedures with children, parents and supervisors.

When visiting animals in public settings, the preferred method of hand hygiene is thorough handwashing at a hand sink supplied with liquid soap, warm water and paper towels

