Questions About the Coronavirus And Its Connection to Animals

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Questions About Corona & Its Connection to Animals

A1:

To date, there is not enough scientific evidence to identify the source or to explain the original route of transmission from an animal source to humans. The predominant route of transmission of COVID-19 is from human to human. Current evidence suggests that the COVID-19 virus emerged from an animal source. Investigations are underway to find that source (including the species involved) and establish the potential role of animals in spreading this disease. Genetic sequence data reveals that the COVID-19 virus is a close relative of another coronavirus found circulating in horseshoe bat (Rhinolophus) populations. It is possible that transmission to humans involved an intermediate host.

Q1:

Can animals infect people with the COVID-19 virus?

لـ: هل يمكن للحيوانات أن تنقل العدوى بفيروس كورونا المستجد إلى البشر؟

س 1:

حتى الآن، لا توجد إثبات علمي كافٍ لتحديد مصدر فيروس كورونا المستجد (SARS-CoV-2) المسبب لمرض COVID-19 أو لتوضيح مسار انتقال العدوى الأصلي من مصدر حيواني إلى البشر. النمط السائد حالياً لانتشار الفيروس هو من إنسان إلى إنسان. تشير الأدلة الحالية إلى أن فيروس كورونا المستجد ظهر في البداية من مصدر حيوي، ولا تزال الدراسات جارية لتحديد هذا المصدر. وظيفة تأكيد هذا الحيوان وخطف الفيروس للانتقال إلى البشر، وفقاً للأبحاث، أظهرت بيانات التسلسل الجيني أن فيروس كورونا المستجد هو قريب من فيروس CoV76 الذي تم رصده في مجموعات الخفافيش رينولوفيوس (Horseshoe Bat).
Q2: Can people infect animals?
Now that COVID-19 virus infections are widespread among the human population, there is a possibility for some animals to contract it through close contact with infected humans. All cases of COVID-19 in animals reported to date indicate that the animals contracted the virus from people.

In Hong Kong, two dogs have tested positive for the virus following close exposure to owners who were sick with COVID-19. The dogs were not exhibiting clinical signs of the disease.

In Belgium, a cat belonging to an owner infected with the COVID-19 virus has tested positive for the virus. The cat was exhibiting symptoms of respiratory and gastro-intestinal illness. Most recently, the virus has been confirmed in one tiger at a zoo in New York. Samples from the animal were taken and tested after several lions and tigers at the zoo showed symptoms of respiratory illness. Public health officials believe these big cats became sick after being exposed to a zoo employee who was infected with the virus.

Studies are underway to better understand the susceptibility of different animal species to the COVID-19 virus. Currently, there is no evidence to suggest that animals infected by humans are playing a role in the spread of COVID-19. Human outbreaks are driven by person-to-person contact.

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Q3: Can animals infect each other?

A 3: To date, the recorded cases have occurred among animals within the same family, such as the case of the big cats at a zoo in New York, as mentioned earlier.
Can farm animals catch the virus?

At present, no such cases have been reported, however, it is advisable to apply biosecurity measures and to maintain health precautions around farm animals. Using protective equipment, such as gloves, shoes, and masks, as well as maintaining personal hygiene, such as washing hands and using disinfectant, contributes to reducing the spread of infectious diseases to animals or people.

Farmers should isolate sick animals from healthy ones if any signs of disease or unexplained changes in behavior appear. Before introducing new animals into their existing herd, they must make sure they have completed an isolation period of at least one month to avoid exposing the herd to infectious diseases.
Q5: Should I take any precautions with live animals or animal products?
As per general good food safety practices:

- Raw meat or animal organs as well as unpasteurized milk should be handled with care to avoid potential cross-contamination with uncooked foods.
- Meat from healthy livestock that is prepared and served in accordance with good hygiene and food safety principles remains safe to eat.

Although there is uncertainty about the origin of the COVID-19 virus, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Organization for Animal Health (OIE) advise to observe the following precautions when visiting live animal markets or animal product markets:

- Wash your hands with soap and water after touching animals and animal products.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Avoid contact with sick animals, spoiled animal products, or other animals that may be living in the markets (e.g. stray cats and dogs, rodents, birds, bats).
- Avoid contact with animal waste or fluids on the floors or surfaces of shops and markets.

وجاء في منشور منظمة الصحة العالمية والمنظمة العالمية للصحة الحيوانية، وذلك على الرغم من عدم وجود معلومات مؤكدة بخصوص أصل فيروس كورونا المستجد، بحيث توصي المنظمة الصحية العالمية بمراجعة الاحتياطات التالية عند زيارة أسواق الحيوانات الحية أو أسواق المنتجات الحيوانية:

- غسل اليدين بالصابون والماء بعد لمس الحيوانات والمنتجات الحيوانية.
- تجنب لمس العينين والأنف والفم.
- تجنب ملامسة الحيوانات المريضة أو المنتجات الحيوانية الفاسدة أو الحيوانات الأخرى التي قد تعيش في الأسواق (مثل القطط والكلاب الخفيفة، والقوارض والطيور والخفافيش).
- تجنب ملامسة مشاركات الحيوانات أو سوائلها على أرضيات المحلات والأسواق.
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Stress are underway to understand if and how different animal species could be affected by the COVID-19 virus. In the four documented cases mentioned earlier, the two dogs had no symptoms, while the cat was exhibiting signs of respiratory and gastro-intestinal disease, and the tiger showed mild respiratory clinical signs, including dry cough and some wheezing, without any respiratory distress.

It is advisable to apply personal protective measures and visit your veterinarian in case your pet or animal displays any abnormal signs.
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A7: If required, your veterinarian can collect samples and arrange testing with the concerned authorities. However, unless your pet/animal has had contact with an infected person, it is not advisable to test it.

Q7: Can I get my pet/animal tested?

ج: في حال الضرورة، يمكن للطبيب البيطري أخذ عينات من الحيوان بالتنسيق مع السلطات المختصة لفحصها. ومن الموصى به إذا لم يكن حيوانك قد حاول شُخُصًا مصابًا بفيروس COVID-19 فلا حاجة لإجراء الفحص.
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Q8: What should I do if I suspect my pet/animal is infected?

You should contact your veterinary clinic. In order to ensure the clinic is prepared for the situation, you should call ahead to arrange the visit and tell the veterinarian if your pet/animal was exposed to a person sick with COVID-19.

Veterinarians who believe an animal should be tested for the virus will contact the concerned animal health authorities to decide whether samples should be collected and tested. To date, there is no evidence that pets/animals, such as dogs, cats, or livestock, spread the disease or transmit it to humans. Therefore, there is no justification in taking measures against pets that may compromise their welfare, such as abandoning them. However, as a general precaution, until your pet/animal gets diagnosed, it is advisable to isolate it from other animals and persons. You should also wear personal protective equipment (mask and gloves) when handling your pet/animal, and use hand disinfectant before and after.

A 8:

マンション와 관련된 질문들

A8: 

يجب التواصل مع الحيوان البيطري الذي تتعامل مهما وإبلاغهم بالمرض والأعراض الذي يعاني منها الحيوان.

يجب حجز موعد مسبق بعد التعريف بكافة الأعراض. يجب إخطار الطبيب البيطري في حالة الحيوان لشخص مصاب بـ19 .

COVID-19

بدورهم سيتواصل الأطباء البيطريون الذين يعتقدون أنه يجب فحص الحيوان للتأكد من إصابته بالموضوع، بالسلطات المعنية بصحة الحيوان للتحديد ما إذا كان ينبغي جمع عينات منه وإجراء اختبارات عليها.

حتى الآن، لا يوجد دليل على أن الحيوانات، مثل الكلاب أو القطط، تنتشر المرض لذلكل، لا يوجد مبرر لاتخاذ تدابير شديدة عليها، مثل التخلص منها بشكل تهديد.

ومن ذلك، كإجراء احتياطي إلى أن يتم تشخيص الحيوان، يتم مشاركته عن الحيوانات والأشخاص الآخرين.

كما يجب ارتداء معدات الحماية الشخصية (القناع والقفازات) عند التعامل مع الحيوانات، واستخدام مطهر اليدين قبل وبعد التعامل معها.
A9: 

To date, there has been no need for a dedicated center for pets/animals infected with COVID-19 in the UAE. Veterinary clinics are handling any suspected animal diseases, so if you have a suspicion that your pet/animal has been infected, contact your veterinarian. You can also call the toll-free call center of the Ministry of Climate Change and Environment: 8003050.

Q9: 

Do we have a center for infected pets/animals or a phone number I can call?
A 10:

If you have COVID-19, follow the instructions of the Ministry of Health and Prevention. Your health and the health of people around you should be your priority at this point. If you have a pet/animal, and are diagnosed with COVID-19 and taken to quarantine, the following measures should be taken:

- You should inform the concerned authorities so that they can advise on the next steps, including taking the pet/animal for testing if required.
- The pet/animal should be isolated and handled carefully while observing the required health precautions.
- You should make arrangements with a reliable person or specialized facility that could take care of your pet/animal in case you live alone and need to leave home for an extended period of time.

Q10: What precautions should I take around my pet/animal if I have COVID-19?

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What precautions should I take around my pet/animal if I have COVID-19?
A 11: Although commercial imports of cats and dogs are temporarily banned, you can bring in your pet from abroad, however, an additional precautionary measure will apply. The accompanying health certificate now requires an annex stating that the animal has not been around a person or an animal that tested positive for COVID-19 in the 14 days prior to shipping, or that it has been quarantined for 14 days under the supervision of a government veterinarian.

Q11: Can I have a pet sent to the UAE from abroad under these circumstances?

س١١: هل يمكن لشخص جلب حيوانه الأليف من خارج الدولة خلال الفترة الحالية؟
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For inquiries, you can contact us at

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