

Tips to help you prevent illness when visiting animal exhibits



Petting zoos, rodeos, county fairs and animal farms are all fun ways to explore the animal world. Exhibits such as petting zoos and fairs allow children of all ages to have the wonderful experience of coming face to face with animals and build upon the important human-animal bond.

Unfortunately however, many people become sick every year because of a visit to an animal exhibit. It is important to remember that animals sometimes carry germs that are harmful to humans.

When people forget to wash their hands after petting an animal or bring food into an area where animals are being housed, they are at risk for becoming ill.

Find out where hand-washing stations are located.

- Always wash your hands after petting animals or touching the animal enclosure, especially before eating and drinking.
- Running water and soap are best. Use hand gels if running water and soap are not available.
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Food and drinks

- Keep food and drinks out of animal areas.
- Do not share your food with animals.
- Do not eat or drink raw (unpasteurized) dairy products.

Children

- Children younger than 5 years old need supervision
- Never allow children to put their hands or objects (For example: pacifiers) in their mouth while interacting with animals.
- Hand washing should be supervised.

For more information, please contact Jefferson County Public Health Consumer Protection Program at 303-232-6301.

Animal Safety . . . Healthy Pets Healthy People

Infants and Young Children

Animal Safety Tips

Infants and children less than 5 years old are more likely than most people to get diseases from animals. This is because young children often touch surfaces that may be contaminated with animal feces (stool), and young children like to put their hands in their mouths. Young children are less likely than others to wash their hands well. Objects such as pacifiers may fall to dirty surfaces and then be placed in an infant's mouth. For some animal diseases, young children are more likely than others to get very sick.

Tips to protect infants and young children from getting sick while handling animals:

- Children younger than 5 years old should be supervised while interacting with animals.
- Children should not be allowed to kiss pets or to put their hands or other objects into their mouths after handling animals.
- Childrens' hands should be washed thoroughly with running water and soap after contact with animals.
- Handwashing prior to breast feeding or preparation of formula is strongly recommended.



The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that infants and children under 5 years old avoid contact with the following animals:

- Reptiles (lizards, snakes, and turtles)
- Amphibians (frogs, toads, newts, and salamanders)
- Baby chicks
- Ducklings
- Petting zoos

Additionally, children less than 5 years old should be extra cautious when visiting farms and having direct contact with farm animals, including animals at petting zoos and fairs.

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