

COVID PROTOCOLS Self-guidance for 2021

1. Use video phones, face time, skype, for exams. The owners can see what you're talking about-IE dental disease or pilling.
2. Make telemedicine appointments with established clients with an exam fee, then rechecks or in hospital exams at a lower price. Doctors can work from home then!!
3. Email exam findings to clients to decrease time with tech and other personnel. It should free up staff time when dealing with clients.
4. All vulnerable people in veterinary medicine (including labs and researchers), should be using N95s or KN95. Ideally a fit test program should be in place compliant with OSHA&CDC regs. CDC guidelines for vets last updated in August 12, 2020. These need to be updated for 2021. Vulnerable people need a power of 10 better protection. (see reference #11) What may be acceptable for 1 person is not acceptable for others.
5. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/veterinarians.html#:~:text=To%20protect%20staff%20and%20preserve,operations%20resume%20in%20your%20community.>
6. Staff need to minimize facial contact, holding and snuggling animals, and keep away from sniffing, panting. DOGS AND CATS CAN GET COVID FROM OWNERS! Cats have been able to shed and pass it to other cats. (JAVMA REFERENCE 2020)
7. Wash hands between animals, carriers, and leash holding. There is extra time needed for this, especially if there's a line for 1 sink.
8. All others should be wearing surgical masks-they generally block transmission more than cotton masks.
9. 40-50% of the population that get Covid have no signs and are not aware they're contagious.
10. Dentals should be full PPE and still maintain distancing, while monitoring vitals. Any other observers should be >6 ft. -ideally about 15 ft. away. This is tough in all the practices because the dental tables are in the treatment rooms-common areas to everyone. Minimize traffic in these areas or schedule dentals appropriately to minimize staff exposure. Allow for deep cleaning after.

11. [COVID-19 Indoor Safety Guideline \(indoor-covid-safety.herokuapp.com\)](https://indoor-covid-safety.herokuapp.com)
Use this tool to see which factors affect your safety in your work environment.
12. Technicians and anyone getting a pet should have the owner get the pet out of the car to transfer the animal outside. **Staff should NOT** get into someone's vehicle. If there is a double doored entry, that can be used in bad weather and to keep animals contained.
13. Cat **MUST** be on a leash or in a carrier so they won't escape. Minimize holding cats because they can get the virus.
14. Collars and harnesses must be tightened by the owners to prevent any animal from escaping. Contrary to that: it's a good thing for each staff person to have their own leash. Leashes, harnesses and collars are fomites that the owners come into contact with (and almost **NEVER** wash!!)
15. Rearrange to reroute foot traffic-IE: make an *in* door separate from *out* door; be able to open exam room doors for ventilation, keep someone in pharmacy and call backs for prescriptions, relocate animals when possible, go in the front door by the scale and leave by the back door (to prevent doubling of exposure indoors and traffic congestion).
16. Use lobby space for phone calls with a mobile phone to avoid crowded areas like hallways.
17. There may be ways to make unused space (like lobbies) available for break areas, medications or food storage, yoga, stretching, or quiet areas for rest. Mask fatigue is a real thing, and we need to find space when possible to help all support staff get through the days.
18. Guide lines for MA laboratories: https://www.mass.gov/doc/sector-specific-workplace-safety-standards-phase-iii-step-1-for-laboratories-to-address-covid/download?_ga=2.264030028.1502407485.1612210941-1119575431.1592671330