



Canadian Food  
Inspection Agency

Agence canadienne  
d'inspection des aliments

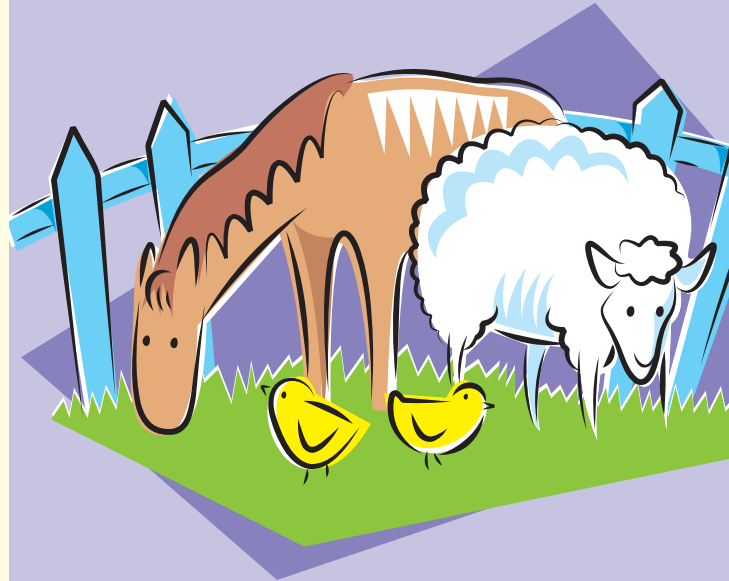
## Safeguarding Canada's Food Supply

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) is the Government of Canada's science-based regulator for animal health, plant protection and, in partnership with Health Canada, food safety.

For more information on food safety or to order free copies of this brochure, visit the CFIA website at [www.inspection.gc.ca](http://www.inspection.gc.ca) or call 1-800-442-2342/TTY 1-800-465-7735 (8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday to Friday). You can also find food safety information at [www.foodsafety.gc.ca](http://www.foodsafety.gc.ca) or on the Health Canada and Canadian Partnership for Consumer Food Safety Education websites respectively at [www.hc-sc.gc.ca](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca) and [www.canfightbac.org](http://www.canfightbac.org)

Cat. no.: A104-13/2011E-PDF  
ISBN: 978-1-100-17696-3  
P0233E-05/10

# Pets and Petting Zoos



**Tips for preventing infections**

Canada

## Can my pets make me sick?

Pets are like family members in many Canadian households, but like all animals, they can carry dangerous organisms. You can come into contact with harmful bacteria, viruses or parasites when you play with and clean up after your pets, handle pet food, and when you visit a petting zoo.



Diseases called “zoonoses” can be passed from animals to humans or from humans to animals. Some zoonoses are very dangerous to humans including:

- infection with *E. coli* O157:H7
- salmonellosis
- toxoplasmosis
- tuberculosis
- rabies

These diseases can be especially dangerous for young children, the elderly, pregnant women and people with weakened immune systems. If left untreated, they can even be deadly.

## How are zoonoses transmitted from animals to humans?

Animals can transmit harmful organisms in several ways:

- scratches, bites and saliva
- feces and fecal dust
- coughs, sneezes or mucus



If you get these harmful organisms on your hands, you could spread them to your face, mouth, eyes or your food.

If you have touched an animal, their toys, their food and treats or cleaned up after them, wash your hands right away before touching anything else!

## Four ways to protect yourself and your family

### 1. Keep your pet healthy

- Take your pet to the veterinarian regularly and have it checked for diseases.
- Keep your pet clean and its claws trimmed (if applicable).
- Beware of what your pet eats: garbage, raw meat and water from the toilet bowl can be dangerous.
- Keep away from wild animals: you and your pet can catch diseases from wild animals and their feces. (Don't forget that squirrels and other rodents can be dangerous too.)

### 2. Watch out for animal waste

- Use waterproof, disposable gloves and wear a mask when cleaning cages, litter boxes, animal pens and fish tanks.
- Clean cages, boxes and pens daily. Put feces in a plastic bag then in the garbage.
- Never use pet feces for fertilizer or compost: it can carry dangerous organisms!
- Cover your child's sandbox since cats like to use sandboxes as litter boxes.

#### DID YOU KNOW?

- Pregnant women should not be exposed to cat litter boxes since these might be contaminated with parasites harmful to the fetus.

### 3. Keep clean

- Wash your hands thoroughly after contact with animal feces, pets, pet turtles, pet rodents, pet food, pet toys and pet treats. Do this before touching your face and before handling food.
- Keep pets away from food preparation, storage and dining areas.

### 4. Take care at petting zoos

- Handwashing is your best defence! After you touch, always wash your hands!

#### DID YOU KNOW?

- Reptiles (like turtles, lizards and snakes) and amphibians (like newts, frogs and toads) can shed *Salmonella* bacteria on their skin or in the water.