

## WSAVA URGES AUTHORITIES AND GOVERNMENTS TO

- ▶ **make essential goods and services available for pets**
- ▶ **keep pets and owners together**
- ▶ **allow dogs owners to take their dogs out for a walk at least once a day**
- ▶ **allow animal care givers to provide food and water for free-roaming animals**

As countries go into lockdown and more restrictions are put in place to control the spread of COVID-19, WSAVA urges authorities and governments to make essential goods and services available for pets as well as for people. This means that pet owners should have access to pet food, essential pet supplies, such as cat litter, medicines and emergency veterinary care.

Essential veterinary services should also be available to limit the spread of zoonotic diseases eg rabies and leptospirosis, and to provide first aid and emergency veterinary care to avoid suffering. The cost-benefit of providing routine services, such as neutering or non-emergency services, should be re-considered.

As there is no evidence of transmission from pets to humans, WSAVA does not encourage the separation of pets and owners for quarantine purposes. In fact,

WSAVA believes that **keeping pets and owners together is beneficial for both animal and human welfare**. Should exposed animals need to be quarantined, their welfare during the quarantine period should not be neglected. Care givers should ensure that their physical and behavioral welfare needs are met during the quarantine period.

Here are some references to support the maintenance of good animal welfare standards:



[\*\*WSAVA Animal Welfare Guidelines\*\*](#)



[The Association of Shelter Veterinarian's \*\*Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters\*\*](#)

We recommend **allowing dog owners to take their dogs out for a walk at least once a day**, if possible. More frequent walks may be needed for dog owners living in flats or apartments without access to private outdoor space. This allows dogs to have exercise and opportunity to toilet. Dog walkers should take the necessary social distancing precautions and wash their hands before and after touching their dogs. Dog owners should not allow their dogs to interact with other people.

As many businesses are closed and people stay at home, free-roaming dogs and cats may have their usual sources of food disrupted. This may cause these animals to suffer hunger and thirst and they may roam beyond their usual territories in search of other food sources. We recommend **allowing animal care givers to provide food and water for these free-roaming animals**. Responsible feeding should be practiced, which includes maintaining safe social distancing during feeding, washing hands before and after feeding, and using hygienic feeding practices.

More information on the safe feeding and watering of free-roaming animals can be found here:



[ICAM answers FAQs on COVID-19 and companion animal population management](#)

