

# Enjoying Animal Exhibits... without getting sick

Diseases called “zoonoses” can be passed from animals to humans. Animals can carry organisms that are harmful to humans without appearing sick. Some zoonoses are very dangerous to humans. Outbreaks of *E.coli* 0157:H7 and *Salmonella* have been associated with animal exhibits.

## People can get diseases from animals through direct contact with:

- the animal,
- their bites and scratches,
- their feces, urine, saliva, or blood,
- the environment where they are contained.

If you get harmful organisms on your hands you can spread them to your face, mouth or food and become ill.

## Who is at greatest risk of illness?

- children less than 5 years of age,
- the elderly,
- pregnant women,
- immuno-compromised persons.

## How do I protect my family and myself?

### While visiting the animals:

- **Do not** eat, drink or smoke,
- **Do not** touch your face or mouth with your hands,
- **Do not** bring children’s toys, or pacifiers into the animal exhibit,
- **Supervise** young children closely.

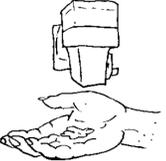
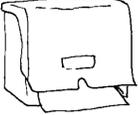
### After visiting the animals: Clean your hands

- **Wash your hands** with soap and water or
  - **Sanitize your hands** with an alcohol based hand sanitizer.
- If you have touched an animal, their cages or enclosures, their food, or cleaned up after them, clean your hands before touching anything else.
  - Always clean your hands before eating, drinking and smoking.

## What if I become ill?

If you or your children become sick with stomach cramps, vomiting or diarrhea within a week of visiting a petting zoo or animal exhibit, visit your doctor.

Tell the doctor that you have been in contact with exhibit animals.

Hand Washing	Hand Sanitizing
 <p>Wet hands with warm running water.</p>	<p><b>If your hands look dirty: STOP</b> Wash them with soap and water first.</p> <p><b>If your hands look clean: GO</b> Hand sanitize.</p>
 <p>Apply liquid soap.</p>	 <p>Apply the alcohol-based hand sanitizer to your hands (minimum 60% alcohol).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ A thumbnail-sized amount is enough.</li> </ul> <p>If you just washed your hands, be sure they are completely dry or the moisture could reduce its effectiveness.</p>
 <p>Lather hands. Be sure to scrub:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ between your fingers</li> <li>➤ your fingertips and fingernails,</li> <li>➤ the back of your hands and wrists.</li> </ul> <p>You should wash your hands for 20 seconds – the time it takes to sing “Happy Birthday” twice</p>	 <p>Rub your hands together. Don't forget:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ between your fingers</li> <li>➤ your fingertips and fingernails,</li> <li>➤ the back of your hands and wrists.</li> </ul> <p>Rub your hands until the alcohol evaporates. Hands will feel dry in about 15 seconds.</p>
 <p>Rinse well under running water.</p>	
 <p>Dry your hands with paper towels.</p>	
 <p>Use the paper towel to turn off the taps.</p>	

For more information contact the Infectious Disease Control Team at 519-663-5317 ext. 2330 or go to [www.healthunit.com](http://www.healthunit.com)

Reference:

Ontario.Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.Public Health Division. Recommendations to prevent disease and injury associated with petting zoos in Ontario. Toronto: Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Mar. 2009 retrieved from <http://www.ontla.on.ca/library/repository/mon/23004/291297.pdf>

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