

Eighteen Practical Recommendations for Preventing the Transmission of Diseases from Animals to Humans

Our topics for this week are

- **The risk of acquiring zoonotic diseases**
- **Situations that increase the spread of zoonotic diseases**
- **Practical means to avoid acquiring zoonotic diseases**

A zoonosis is any infectious disease of animals that can be transmitted to humans under natural conditions. Of the more than 1400 known infectious diseases of humans, 60% are zoonotic. Most are associated with the gastrointestinal tract and transmission is fecal-oral. More than 50 zoonotic diseases are known to be present in the U.S. Examples include rabies, salmonellosis, cryptosporidiosis, plague, sporotrichosis, psittacosis, and ringworm. Routes of transmission of zoonotic diseases include contact, aerosol, and vector-borne. Every animal can carry some diseases that humans could acquire. However, handling apparently healthy domestic animals using basic sanitary practices, such as keeping hands away from eyes, nose, and mouth, keeping skin cuts covered, and washing hands after handling animals carries very little risk of acquiring zoonotic disease. Stressful handling, including prolonged transportation, or overcrowding of animals can increase the risk of animals shedding disease organisms.

Recommendations to Prevent Zoonotic Diseases

1. Thoroughly wash your hands after feeding or touching animals or moving their waste; do not dry hands on clothing
2. Do not permit animals to eat from human plates or utensils
3. Keep pets supervised to prevent hunting at will and do not feed raw meat
4. Do not eat or drink in animal handling areas
5. Wear appropriate clothing when handling animals
6. Do not kiss animals
7. Wash cuts thoroughly
8. Wear gloves when gardening
9. Keep animal environment reasonably clean and prevent children from playing where there is animal waste. For example, covers should be kept on children's sand boxes when not in use.
10. Clean cat litter daily and wash your hands immediately afterwards

11. Keep animals from household areas where human food is prepared or handled
12. Do not bathe pets in sinks or bathtubs used by humans
13. Deworm animals on regular basis and provide reasonable control of fleas, ticks, and mosquitoes
14. Avoid stray animals
15. Do not keep wild animals as pets
16. Vaccinate animals against zoonotic diseases and maintain tetanus vaccinations in all animal handlers and rabies vaccinations in high risk animal handlers
17. Use proper low-stress handling techniques and containment practices and facilities to reduce stress-induced shedding of zoonotic diseases
18. Routinely train animal handlers on the prevention of zoonotic disease and animal handling safety measures

If you have comments or you're interested in particular animal handling subjects, contact us at CBC@BetterAnimalHandling.com

Now let's recap the key points to remember from today's episode:

- 1. Always wash your hands after handling animals or their feed and water containers.**
- 2. A variety of stresses can cause animals to shed zoonotic disease organisms.**
- 3. Don't kiss animals.**

More information on animal handling can be found in my books, *Animal Handling and Physical Restraint*, *Concise Textbook of Small Animal Handling*, and *Concise Textbook of Large Animal Handling* all published by CRC Press and available on Amazon and from many other fine book supply sources.

Additional information is provided at: www.betteranimalhandling.com . This website has more than 350 past podcasts with notes on handling of dogs, cats, other small mammals, birds, reptiles, horses, cattle, small ruminants, swine, and poultry.

Don't forget, serious injury or death can result from handling and restraining some animals. Safe and effective handling and restraint requires experience and continual practice. Acquisition of the needed skills should be under the supervision of an experienced animal handler.