



## No-contact vet visits: 5 things you need to know

### *Keeping you, your pet, and veterinary teams safe during lockdown*

Given the extended lockdown and tighter restrictions in Greater Sydney and parts of NSW, most vet clinics are moving to low or no contact visits.

While you can still take your pet to the vet, the experience may be a little different to what you're used to. To ensure social distancing requirements are met, you may not be able to be present while your pet is examined and treated.

The University of Sydney's Dr Anne Quain has published research on stressors experienced by vet teams at the advent of the pandemic, which showed a big source of stress was ensuring clients adhere to biosecurity protocols. Communication may also be trickier due to mask wearing and physical distancing.

A companion animal researcher and veterinary practitioner, Dr Quain has some tips to improve pet, vet, and pet-owner care during this lockdown:



- 1.** Make an appointment or, if an emergency, call ahead to let the team know you are coming. It can take a bit longer to get an appointment, so for non-emergencies, give as much notice as you can.
- 2.** Only one person should accompany the animal to the vet, wherever possible.
- 3.** Provide the veterinary team with concise written or typed dot points listing your concerns or email them ahead of time. You may also want to include photos, for example, an area on the animal's body you are concerned about; or videos where the symptoms may be intermittent (e.g., of coughing, limping). Ensure your phone is charged and switched on so that the veterinary team can call you for additional information.
- 4.** Follow government advice. That means checking in, wearing a mask, and physically distancing while you wait.
- 5.** Please be patient with veterinary teams. Waiting times may be extended.

"We know that this is a stressful time for everyone, especially those worried about their pets," said Dr Quain from the University's School of Veterinary Science.

"Pet owners should be assured that regular and emergency veterinary care continues to be available. They can help their veterinary teams provide ongoing care to animals by taking these steps."

**Dr Anne Quain BA (Hons) BScVet (Hons) BVSc(Hons) MVetStud GradCertEduStud (HigherEd) MANZCVS (Animal Welfare) DipECAWBM (AWSEL)**