

Recommendations --- Animals in Health-Care Facilities

I. General Infection-Control Measures for Animal Encounters

- A. Minimize contact with animal saliva, dander, urine, and feces (388--390). Category II
- B. Practice hand hygiene after any animal contact (146,270). Category II
 - 1. Wash hands with soap and water, especially if hands are visibly soiled or contaminated with proteinaceous material (146). Category II
 - 2. Use either soap and water or alcohol-based hand rubs when hands are not visibly soiled or contaminated (146). Category II

II. Animal-Assisted Activities and Resident Animal Programs

- A. Avoid selection of nonhuman primates and reptiles in animal-assisted activities, animal-assisted therapy, or resident animal programs (391--393). Category IB
- B. Enroll animals that are fully vaccinated for zoonotic diseases and that are healthy, clean, well-groomed, and negative for enteric parasites or otherwise have completed recent anthelmintic treatment under the regular care of a veterinarian (391,394). Category II
- C. Enroll animals that are trained with the assistance or under the direction of persons who are experienced in this field (391). Category II
- D. Ensure that animals are controlled by persons trained in providing activities or therapies safely, and who know the animal's health status and behavior traits (391,394). Category II
- E. Take prompt action when an incident of biting or scratching by an animal occurs during an animal-assisted activity or therapy.
 - 1. Remove the animal permanently from these programs (391). Category II
 - 2. Report the incident promptly to appropriate authorities (e.g., infection-control staff, animal program coordinator, or local animal control personnel) (391). Category II
 - 3. Promptly clean and treat scratches, bites, or other breaks in the skin. Category II
- F. Perform an ICRA and work actively with the animal handler before conducting an animal-assisted activity or therapy to determine whether the session should be held in a public area of the facility or in individual patient rooms (391,394). Category II
- G. Take precautions to mitigate allergic responses to animals. Category II
 - 1. Minimize shedding of animal dander by bathing animals <24 hours before a visit (391). Category II
 - 2. Groom animals to remove loose hair before a visit, or use a therapy animal cape (395). Category II
- H. Use routine cleaning protocols for housekeeping surfaces after therapy sessions. Category II
- I. Restrict resident animals, including fish in tanks, from access to patient-care areas, food-preparation areas, dining areas, laundry, central sterile supply areas, sterile and clean

supply storage areas, medication preparation areas, operating rooms, isolation areas, and PE areas. Category II

- J. Establish a facility policy for regular cleaning of fish tanks, rodent cages, and bird cages, and any other animal dwellings and assign this cleaning task to a nonpatient-care staff member; avoid splashing tank water or contaminating environmental surfaces with animal bedding. Category II

III. Protective Measures for Immunocompromised Patients

- A. Advise patients to avoid contact with animal feces, saliva, urine, or solid litter box material (396). Category II
- B. Promptly clean and treat scratches, bites, or other wounds that break the skin (396). Category II
- C. Advise patients to avoid direct or indirect contact with reptiles (397). Category IB
- D. Conduct a case-by-case assessment to determine if animal-assisted activities or animal-assisted therapy programs are appropriate for immunocompromised patients (394). Category II
- E. No recommendation is offered regarding permitting pet visits to terminally ill immunocompromised patients outside their PE units. Unresolved issue.

IV. Service Animals

- A. Avoid providing facility access to nonhuman primates and reptiles as service animals (393,397). Category IB
- B. Allow service animals access to the facility in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, unless the presence of the animal creates a direct threat to other persons or a fundamental alteration in the nature of services (389,398). Category IC (U.S. Department of Justice: 28 CFR § 36.302)
- C. When a decision must be made regarding a service animal's access to any particular area of the health-care facility, evaluate the service animal, patient, and health-care situation on a case-by-case basis to determine whether significant risk of harm exists and whether reasonable modifications in policies and procedures will mitigate this risk (398). Category IC (U.S. Department of Justice: 28 CFR § 36.208)
- D. If a patient must be separated from his or her service animal while in the health-care facility 1) ascertain from the person what arrangements have been made for supervision or care of the animal during this period of separation; and 2) make appropriate arrangements to address the patient's needs in the absence of the service animal. Category II