



ANIMAL CRACKERS

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER ~ MAY 2020

Delaware Lawmakers Pass Groundbreaking Bill to Allow Titer Test in Lieu of Rabies Vaccine

By Brandy Arnold

Posted on Feb 7, 2020

<https://www.dogingtonpost.com>

Lawmakers in Delaware stepped up to help pets in a way that's never been done in any state in the country. Once signed by the Governor, Maggie's Pet Vaccine Protection Act could save the lives of countless pets moving forward.

Maggie's Vaccine Protection Act, formally known as House Bill 214, unanimously passed in both the Delaware House and Senate, leaving just Gov. John Carney's signature the last step in making it official. Once signed, veterinarians and pet owners will have the ability to exempt a pet from legally required rabies vaccine if the animal is sick, disabled, injured, or if other medical considerations exist which make vaccination a risk to the animal's health and life. Instead of a vaccination, a Titer test, which measures a pet's antibodies to combat rabies, can be used.

Delaware businessman and pet owner Al Casapulla initiated the bill after losing his beloved Shih Tzu, Maggie, to over-vaccination when state law required she be vaccinated, regardless of whether it was safe.

"I have been working on this bill since she died... I am extremely excited and very emotional," Casapulla told the [Coastal Point](#) after learning the act had passed. "My passion to see this through was more than the passion I had when I started

my business, because I knew if this gets passed we would be saving the lives of so many innocent animals and allowing vets to use their discretion on making legal, educated exemptions." "Maggie will be saving lives long after I am gone," he said in an emotional Facebook post:

It's done!! Maggie's Bill made it thru by a unanimous vote! We are now the first state in the United States with a bill like this. We are now the first state to accept a titer. And if your pet is sick the vet can now write an exemption from the rabies vaccination. This is not a law until it is signed by the governor. But it is officially passed now! Thank you for support in this. Maggie will be saving lives long after I am gone. Her death was not in vain. Maggie Strong!!

Governor Carney is expected to sign the bill in May. This is OUTSTANDING news! Now, we need to work on California.



COVID 19 & Our Animals from Blue Oak Veterinary

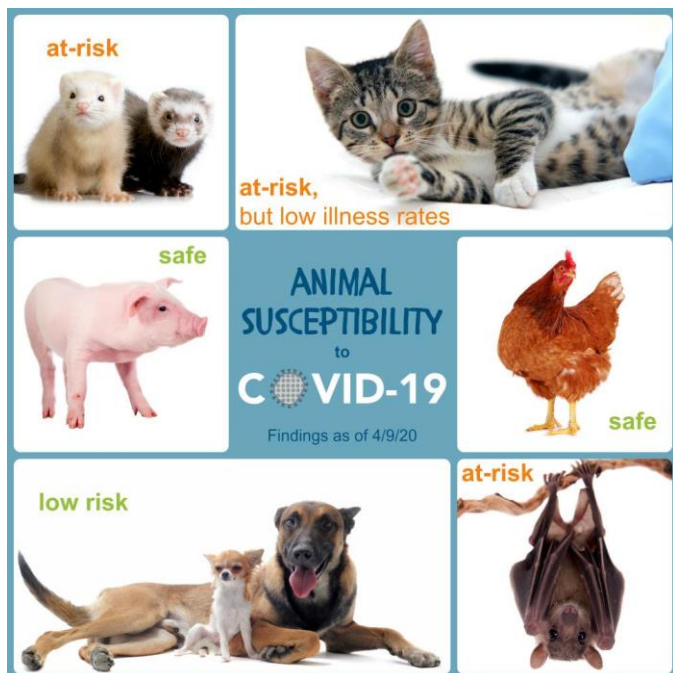
One of the big questions we've been asked lately is, "Can I catch COVID-19 from my pet?"

While the full answer is a little complicated, the short answer is "No."

Fluffy and Fido are not a threat.

Though there have been cases of a few non-human animals testing positive for COVID-19, **there is no evidence so far that our pets can transmit this coronavirus to us.** In fact, if there is a concern, it may be the other way around. So far, the only cases where animals have contracted COVID-19 have been where they were in contact with a virus-positive human.

We know what you're thinking: "Oh, great! I don't want to make my pet sick!". Don't worry, we're on the same page there. All evidence points to COVID-19 being much better adapted to thrive in humans than in other species. There have been a couple of experimental studies ([click here](#) and [here](#)) to test infectiousness of the virus in other animals. So far here are the results:



- Pigs: safe
- Chickens: safe
- Fruit bats: might be a little susceptible
- Ferrets: susceptible
- Cats: susceptible, but low rates of illness
- Dogs: low susceptibility

But what about the tigers?

The lesson learned from the [tiger](#) at the Bronx Zoo is the same one we'd like you to take away from this. If you or anyone in your household is showing signs of illness (fever, cough, etc.) or has been exposed to someone known to have COVID-19, it's best to avoid direct, close contact with your pets – especially cats and ferrets.

You don't have to do anything drastic, just wash your hands before and after handling your pets, and if there are sick humans in your house, keep pets of the feline, canine, and ferret variety out of the sickroom. No kitty snuggles for the convalescents with this bug.

For additional information on COVID-19 for pet owners, we recommend these articles:

[Veterinary Partner COVID-19 FAQ for Pet Owners](#)
[AVMA: SARS-CoV-2 in animals, including pets](#)
[CDC: Daily Life and Coping - If You Have Animals](#)

And one more important thing to keep in mind: information and recommendations may change as our understanding of the virus and associated disease evolves, so be sure to check with us and/or monitor the shared sources in this newsletter regularly for new information.

Most importantly and as always, if you think your pet isn't well, please don't hesitate to contact us. We're here for you!

Sincerely,
Your friends at Blue Oak Veterinary Hospital



And Speaking of Staying Home ~
from *The Bark*, April 2020

Separation Anxiety Training

Downtime provides a unique opportunity
By [Tracy Krulik](#) CTC, CSAT, March 2020, Updated
April 2020

Trainer Tracy Krulik specializes in working with dogs who experience separation anxiety. She recently realized that the new stay-at-home order most people are facing offers a unique opportunity for training our dogs—she shares her thoughts on *Teaching Dogs How to Handle Being Alone*.

Two weeks ago I celebrated with one of my separation anxiety clients over her newfound ability to leave her dogs alone for three-plus hours without barking complaints from her apartment neighbors. And then suddenly the gym where she could finally climb the rock wall again closed and the library that she visited on her first night of dog-less freedom closed and the coffee shops closed

and... you know where this is going. But I'm not the kind of person to dwell on the negative, and neither is she, so we had a good laugh about the irony of it all.

Then it hit me: This [Coronavirus](#) shutdown is the PERFECT time for us to teach dogs how to handle being alone.

On its face that statement doesn't seem to make sense. How can dogs learn to be alone if we don't leave them to go to work or the gym or the grocery store? The answer is that now that we don't *have* to leave for extended periods of times, we can finally leave in small enough increments that teach the pups that there is nothing to worry about.

Let me explain. When someone is scared—dogs, cats, people, you name it—we can teach them to overcome their fear by using a behavioral psychology process called systematic desensitization. Basically, we introduce the thing that is scary but at a level that is not scary.

Take my arachnophobia, for example. If I want to overcome the fear that was instilled in me at a young age when my house was infested by big, brown, furry, eight-legged monsters (*OMG I'm sweating just writing about this!*), the first thing I'd need to do is figure out how far away I could be from a spider without being scared. Let's say that distance is 10-feet away with a spider in an enclosed tank.

So I'm 10 feet away. I'm in a comfy chair, eating chocolate, reading [Finding Dorothy](#) by Elizabeth Letts (amazing book if you're looking), and I feel fine. No sweats, no goosebumps, no worry lines on my forehead. I am completely relaxed. Great. Let's see if I can inch a little closer. Nine feet away—still no problem. Eight feet—I'm good. Seven feet—*gulp!* Way too close. Let's back 'er up a bit... 7.5 feet—all good.

Little by little I move closer, but only as long as I still feel fine. If after I finally made it to six feet

without any worry, the spider got out of the tank and started running towards me, I would scream and run away, and the progress I had made would be wiped clean. The key is controlling that distance so that I can always feel safe. Let's apply this to dogs who are scared to be alone now.

Almost every dog that I work with flies to the door the second their people walk to the door, turn the door handle, or open the door. Pups are not dummies. They've figured out that every time the keys make that jingly sound or the jacket goes on, their people leave through that door, and their terror begins. We know this because they whimper; they stiffen; they yawn; they lick their lips; they bark; they howl; they jump up to the door knob; they scratch and chew the door, the frame, the floor; they lose their bladders; they break out of their crates and cut themselves in the process...

All of those behaviors are rooted in fear. Notice how your dog does not do that when someone else is there? They're scared when they're alone, and so—just as I would scream in terror if someone locked me in a room with spiders (*OMGOMGOMG!*)—if we stop scaring them, the “bad” behaviors go away too.

So rather than thinking of separation anxiety training as something to “teach your dog that you always come back in,” think of it as training to “teach your dog that nothing bad ever happens when you walk out that door.” In order to do that, you have to watch their body language to control how long you are gone, just as I would have to pay attention to how I'm feeling to control my distance from spiders.

Find that starting point. When you turn your door knob, does your dog fly to the door? Then don't turn the door knob yet. Just walk to the door and then go back and sit down. Can you open the door halfway, but all the way is too far? Fine, only open it halfway until you dog doesn't even look up when you go to do that. Can you stand outside with the

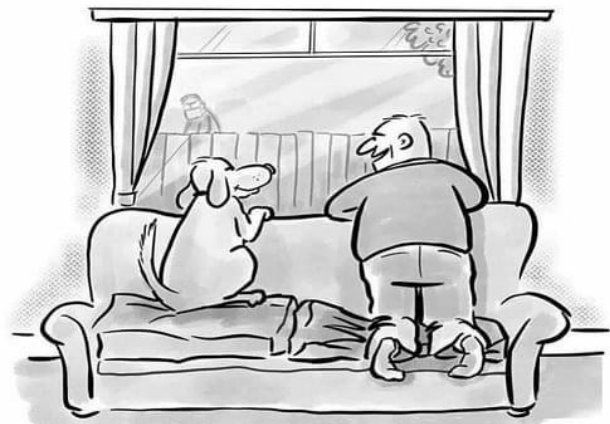
door closed for 1 second, but 2 seconds is too long? Ok! Great info. Keep it under 2 seconds.

Get the idea? There will never be a better time in our society for us to help so many dogs overcome their fears of being alone, because we're all home! We can still go outside for a drive or a walk and be safe from infection, so pick one or two times a day to do 30-minutes of alone-time exercises.

And for all the wonderful people who are adopting dogs right now, do these exercises too! Teach your dog that nothing bad ever happens when you walk out the door before anything bad does happen. Just as you wouldn't simply throw a dog in a crate without teaching him to feel comfortable in it first, don't leave a new dog alone home without giving him the skills to handle it. Up to 55% of dogs worldwide exhibit some kind of separation-related problem, so why risk that happening to your dog too? Tackle the issue before it becomes a problem.

Tracy Krulik, CTC, CSAT, is a Northern Virginia-based certified canine separation anxiety trainer and honors graduate of Jean Donaldson's prestigious [Academy for Dog Trainers](#). Krulik is also the founder and managing editor of [iSpeakDog](#) — a website and public awareness campaign to teach dog body language and behavior.

tracykrulik.com



“Until now, I never understood why you got so excited when someone walked past the house.”

Health tips by Doc Hopper



Last summer there was a lot of warnings about the blue green algae that was so toxic to dogs that many were dying after swimming in lakes. While the majority of the cases were in other states, it is good to be aware if you take your dogs to swim in local lakes.

Hopefully this won't be an issue this summer, but I thought it prudent to share this information from the KCRA3 website:

Dog owners in the Southeast are spreading the word about the dangers of contaminated water following the deaths of their beloved pets.

In Wilmington, North Carolina, three dogs died after frolicking in a pond, while another succumbed after a swim in Lake Allatoona, Georgia. A common enemy likely led to the deaths of all four dogs: liver failure brought on by ingesting water contaminated with toxic blue-green algae.

These pets died in the same region, but toxic algae can be found all over the United States -- so dog owners throughout the nation need to be on the lookout.

What is toxic algae?

Algae occurs naturally in water, but the blue-green variety are considered harmful algal blooms. Blue-green algae, also known as cyanobacteria, are "primitive," photosynthetic organisms that can feed off the sun to make their own energy and release oxygen and possibly toxins in the process, said David G. Schmale III, a professor at Virginia Tech.

Some species produce potent toxins that can sicken or even kill people, pets and wildlife, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Blue-green algae and other HABs can produce different types of poisons, some that affect the liver, others the brain.

Schmale said he hasn't seen a coroner's report to verify the causes of death, still he speculates the dogs were thirsty and the water contaminated. "Samples of the water where the dogs were likely exposed will need to be tested" for toxins and bacteria to verify this, though, he said.

Where do these algae grow?

Harmful algae can bloom in both fresh and marine water. They've been observed in large freshwater lakes, smaller inland lakes, rivers, reservoirs and marine coastal areas and estuaries in all 50 states, according to Schmale.

Toxic algae can also grow in decorative ponds as well as backyard pools, providing homeowners with a good reason to properly sanitize swimming water.

What do toxic algae look like?

Toxic algae can look like foam, scum or mats on the surface of water, said Schmale. Harmful algae blooms, which can be blue, vibrant green, brown or red, are sometimes mistaken for paint floating on the water.

Toxic algae often stink, sometimes producing a downright nauseating smell, yet animals may be attracted to the smell and taste of them, according to the EPA.

How do I know if my dog has been exposed?

Symptoms, which usually arise anywhere from 15 minutes to several days after exposure, include diarrhea or vomiting, weakness or staggering, drooling, difficulty breathing and convulsions or seizures, the EPA reports. Immediately, take your pet to the vet if you see these symptoms.

Dogs, more than other pets, are especially vulnerable because of their tendency to play in water and so sometimes they drink the toxic algae, other times they lick it off their fur. Even dogs that avoid the water may be in danger. Many dogs like to scavenge the shore where they may find -- and eat -- drying clumps of algae.

One study identified 368 cases of toxic algae poisoning associated with dogs throughout the U.S. over a nine-decade period, but the researchers believe this represents only "a small fraction of cases that occur throughout the U.S. each year."

How do I keep my dog safe?

If you spot the algae, leave the area and don't let your dog drink or swim in the water. If your dog has already gotten into a harmful bloom, rinse your pet off immediately in fresh, clean water.

Can I be harmed by the algae?

When high concentrations of these cyanotoxins are consumed, they can poison not only domestic animals but also humans, said Schmale. Contact with toxic algae can cause rashes, stomach cramps, nausea, diarrhea and vomiting.

Remember to wear gloves to protect yourself. And, if you know you've been in contact with the bloom, immediately wash with soap and water.



Dog Stats

(by Ed and Dolores Ransom)

Month	Volunteer Hours	Adoptions
February	323.25	10
March	365.00	14
April	closed	4
Totals	688.25	28



FOR THOSE THAT HAVE NEVER SEEN A CATFISH !!



Dear Miss Penny Paws

My owner loves to go-go-go! I love to go too, but riding in the car is kind of scary. When we go for rides, my owners sometimes will put me in the front seat of the car, sometimes in the back seat, and occasionally I ride on the floor because of all her stuff. I find myself sliding around on the seat and sometimes her junk falls on my head. Isn't there a better way? Help!

Signed,
Dizzy in the Datsun

Dear Diz,

I have a few suggestions that may help your comfort level and ensure you'll be safe in the car. First, your owner needs to follow the same rules for you as is required for babies in car seats. You should never ride in the front seat or on the floor in the front. EVER! Not only could you become a flying projectile in an accident, but if the airbag deploys, you will be arriving at the Rainbow Bridge much sooner than you or your owner would like!

Airbags deploy at approximately 60-186 MPH and can deploy at only 5-15 mph, depending on where the collision occurs. That is extremely dangerous for children as well as for animals.

Your owner can use a crate, secured in the backseat, with you inside. If your owner has a wagon, van, or SUV, there are barriers to secure you safely in the back. And young dogs, about 6 months or younger, should always ride in a crate, even if they are located behind a barrier.

Save travels,
Miss Penny Paws

Coworker: are you ok? You look tired.
Me:





BY TIMOTHY ROBERTS

From the Animal Rescue Site:

<https://blog.theanimalrescuesite.greatergood.com/>

We all love our dogs and want what is best for them. We watch out for their health and happiness because we know that they are not able to always take care of themselves. Just like we would prepare a home for a new baby, we try to make sure that hidden dangers are not problematic for our dogs. Sometimes, however, it takes a reminder to know when something really needs to be corrected.

Wasabi was a family dog that became a victim of a hidden danger. Patricia Polacco was his grandmother and she posted the following to Facebook:

"My Daughter Traci lost her dearest dog Wasabi to this...it was a pork rind bag. She had left to go pick up something at a friends, wasn't even gone 10 minutes and her roommate called. He found her next to the front door with the bag still on her head.

HAD SHE KNOWN.....it hadn't even crossed her mind that something like this could happen. None of us knew!!!! Please spread the word. Chip bags, zip lock bags that had left over food in them, treat bags, yogurt containers, especially the Yoplait, cut it all up!!!! Don't leave them where pups and cats can get to them. Our hearts are still broken. Thank you."

To be safe, always secure any food products away from your pets, and anything you consume, that came in a bag, always tear the bag down the side before disposing of it because you never know when your pet may decide to grab it out of the trash. Even if your trash is secure, tear the bags, "just in case" because after all, dogs are amazingly brilliant about figuring out how to get items they shouldn't have and despite our best efforts, often succeed!



Kibbles and Bits....

The Public is always welcome to attend our meetings, which are generally held the first Wednesday of the month at noon, at the building next to the Animal Services building. Of course with COVID-19, our meetings are temporarily postponed, but we'd love to have you join us once we are able to resume our monthly meetings.



Our Wonderful Supporters to the Rescue!

We don't always get to see first-hand the awesome success stories that FOCAS and our supporters participate in with some of the shelter animals.

This is Maiden. Maiden started out her life in Valley Springs as a potential livestock guardian dog, caring for sheep. Her owners also had 6 children. Maiden quickly figured out that the children were more fun than the sheep and kept getting out of the pen to play with the kids.

So Maiden was rehomed as a potential guardian for goats, without any children at the residence. Unfortunately, she had already learned that people were much more fun than animals and wouldn't

stay with the goats either. So Maiden was again due for a new home.



Maiden went to Mountain Ranch to live as a pet – her dream job!

She is learning her way around some new things, such as this bear. As explained by Ivy, "So we have this wooden bear. She has been barking at it. This is Maiden getting to know the bear."



This is Ivy's 9-month old grandson with the new pup. We think Maiden has found the PERFECT home!



A Mother's Day poem from the dog



You feed me when I'm hungry,
You keep water in my dish.
You let me sleep on anything,
Or in any place I wish



You sometimes let me lick your hands,
or even lick your face.
Despite the fact I've licked myself
In every private place.

You taught me how to come when called,
You taught me how to sit.
You always let me go outside,
So I can take a s---

You'll always have my loyalty,
Up to the bitter end.
'Cause after all, it's plain to see,
You are my best friend!

Happy Mother's Day!



It's a very hard time for everyone in this new, strange COVID-19 world. We are all hoping things will settle soon and we can experience a somewhat normal life again. Until then, many of us cope with humor, so in that vein, here are a few more things to make you smile and hopefully laugh out loud. Stay safe and healthy – Kim

First day back at school after lockdown 🤔🤔🤔🤔



What part of 'STAY AT HOME' did you not understand?



**Quarantine has turned us all into dogs.
We roam the house all day looking for food.
We are told 'no' if we get too close to strangers.
And we get really excited about car rides.**