

# How YOU can...



# Maintain Hygiene Around Animals

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**Animals play a very positive role in our lives. We live with and care for them, visit them at zoos and fairs, and may even raise them. Although germs from domestic, farm and exotic animals can pose health risks, you can protect yourself and others by adopting several practices.**

Animals, even healthy ones, can shed harmful germs from their mouth, fur, and feet, and from manure. Livestock and domestic pets have naturally occurring bacteria in their gut that may cause health problems in children and adults.

Although baby animals are often the cutest, they tend to carry the most germs because they have yet to built up their immune systems. Poultry and reptiles are also carriers of high levels of germs and bacteria; care must be taken during and after being around them.

**To properly wash your hands, apply clean water and soap, and make sure you scrub thoroughly for 20 seconds. Rinse your hands under running water and air dry or use a clean towel.**

## **Follow these guidelines:**

- Do not eat, drink, bite your nails, touch your face, or smoke around animals to prevent putting bacteria and other germs into your body.
- Children that have been around animals should be prevented from sucking their thumbs or using pacifiers until they have washed their hands.
- Wash your hands after handling your animal's food or bowls, and after cleaning cages or litter boxes.
- Don't put your face in an animal's face or let your dog lick your face, as this also increases your chances of having their germs enter your body.
- Clean contaminated footwear and clothing after interacting with animals.
- As a general rule, people at high risk of getting sick should avoid coming in contact with animals. High risk individuals are those with weakened immune systems, are 5 years of age and under, 65 years of age and older, and pregnant individuals.

**Interacting with animals can be a very enjoyable and educational experience. Maintain proper hygiene to ensure the safety of yourself and those around you!**



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