

## Practice Recommendations

The CVMA recommends that veterinary professionals limit their practices to urgent and emergency care appointments only during the time of the statewide shelter-at-home order, and that all other appointments be postponed.

The CVMA is making this recommendation with the intention of trying to limit the spread of COVID-19 by honoring the Governor's directive. It is based on the principle that: the less people are out in public, interacting, the less they will have a chance to transmit or contract the virus.

This is addressed in this frequently asked question published by the Governor's office: <https://covid19.ca.gov/stay-home-except-for-essential-needs/> Specifically it states:

### ***What about routine, elective or non-urgent medical appointments?***

*Non-essential medical care like eye exams, teeth cleaning, and elective procedures must/should be cancelled or scheduled.*

*Contact your health care provider to see what services they are providing.*

Our state health officials have asked all Californian's to use their discretion in determining what must be done now vs. what can wait. The California Department of Public Health has informed all local public health officers to encourage veterinary practices to include rabies vaccination of pets as an essential service.

The following are recommendations by the CVMA for practices to minimize the potential spread of COVID-19 while remaining open:

- **Review the Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidance document for veterinary practices here:** <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/veterinarians.html>
- Limit physical contact with clients and staff and apply social distancing recommendations. Examples of measures that can be taken include the following:
  - Allow a limited number of clients in the practice at a time.
  - Schedule appointments at appropriate intervals to avoid clients arriving at the practice at the same time.
  - Set up a protocol for clients to remain outside of the practice if possible. Staff can check them in and have clients and patients enter at the appropriate time.
  - Keep adequate space between staff and clients, using the six foot rule as a guide.

- Utilize electronic communication with clients when taking histories during the patient exam and when discussing patients/cases with clients.
  - Follow all mandates set by your county order.
- Escalate cleaning and sanitation protocols. Here are examples:
  - Institute strict hand washing and sanitation protocols for all practice staff, including frequently washing hands with soap for at least 20 seconds, using disposable gloves, and avoiding touching the face.
  - Regularly disinfect “high-touch” surfaces such as door handles, light switches, telephones, keyboards, and other surfaces that are frequently touched.
  - Increase the cleaning frequency of the practice.
  
- Give special consideration to vulnerable groups which include, but are not limited to the following:
  - Older adults (65+)
  - Individuals with compromised immune systems
  - Individuals who have serious chronic medical conditions such as:
    - Heart disease
    - Diabetes
    - Lung disease

Practices may need to make special accommodations for individuals at an increased risk of COVID-19 illness.