

**Ministry of Health  
and Long-Term Care**

Chief Medical Officer of Health

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Toronto ON M7A 1R3Téléphone: (416) 212-3831  
Télécopieur: (416) 325-8412**MEMORANDUM****TO: Petting Zoo Owners and Operators****Re: Keeping Guests and Staff Healthy and Safe**

Petting zoos offer a wonderful opportunity for children to see animals up close, interact with them and learn about them. However, it's important for owners and operators to keep in mind that there are small but real risks associated with close contact with animals.

Zoonotic infections – those that can be passed from animals to people – include potentially serious infections such as *Salmonella* and *E. coli*. As a result of past outbreaks associated with petting zoos, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care has developed various resource materials, including a report to help petting zoo owners and operators keep guests and staff healthy and safe.

We encourage you to download and read the report and executive summary at [www.health.gov.on.ca/pettingzoos](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/pettingzoos). These documents identify high-risk groups (such as very young children) and include important recommendations related to visitor education and the safe operation of petting zoos.

On the same website, you will find colourful posters that make it easy for you to communicate two simple precautions that help prevent zoonotic infections:

- Clean your hands after petting the animals
- Do not eat or drink near the animals

We strongly recommend that you display these posters at the entrances and exits to animal enclosures and in non-animal areas where people buy and eat food.

Finally, because hand-hygiene was identified in the report as the single most effective way for people to protect themselves from infection, we have included signs that illustrate proper hand-washing and hand-sanitizing techniques. We suggest that you post these at hand-hygiene stations.

By taking simple steps to educate guests and staff about effective prevention strategies, you can minimize the risk of zoonotic infections at your petting zoo and help keep children and adults in Ontario healthy and safe.



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