



Skin or mucous membrane contact - Infections may be spread directly through animal bites or scratches or indirectly when broken skin or mucous membranes come in contact with contaminated animals or surfaces. An example of a disease transmitted in this way is ringworm.

Urine - Some infections are transmitted when contaminated urine is ingested or comes in contact with mucous membranes or wounds. An example of a disease transmitted in this way is leptospirosis.

Groups at increased risk

People who are at an increased risk of contracting a zoonosis or who may suffer more severe symptoms include:

- Pregnant women
- Immunosuppressed persons including persons with diabetes, chronic illnesses (including liver or kidney disease), HIV, and persons who are having immunosuppressive therapy.
- Children under 5 years of age:
 - Children under 5 years of age should be closely supervised when in contact with animals and their enclosures to prevent the animals licking their faces or hands.
 - Infants under one year of age should not be allowed to touch animals or their enclosures.

People with animal allergies

People with allergies to some animals should be prepared to treat an allergic reaction.

What are the responsibilities of the petting zoo operator?

Negligence and Duty of Care – the operator is liable for injuries to persons who were reasonably likely to be harmed by the operator's actions when there was a p

- Maintaining animals in an environment that maintains their health and well being. Faeces and other wastes, including birth products, should be regularly disposed of.
- Having separate animal contact and public eating areas.
- Providing only healthy animals for public display or contact. Animals that become ill should be promptly removed from display.
- Establishing an association with a vet to ensure that animals are clinically healthy.
- Vaccinating animals appropriately e.g. against leptospirosis.
- Reducing stress and overcrowding of animals to reduce the risk of disease.
- Not allowing direct viewing of birthing animals or contact with newborn animals.
- Providing only pasteurised milk or milk products for tasting.
- Providing adequate barriers that prevent visitors from touching animals that should not be touched.
- Providing a first aid kit and providing staff with first aid training.
- Placing hand washing signs in appropriate locations (see Appendix 2).

Operators should erect signs in obvious and prominent locations, such as the entrance and/or enclosures of the petting zoo to remind visitors to:

- Use good hygiene practices in the petting zoo environment (e.g.: Avoid touching your face until you have cleaned your hands).
- Eat or drink only in designated areas, not in animal contact areas. If a premise does not have separate eating and animal contact areas, hands should be washed with soap and running water (or an alcohol based hand cleansing lotion) before eating and after touching animals.
- Wash hands with soap and running water (or an alcohol based hand cleansing lotion) when leaving animal enclosures and before eating.

See Appendix 2 for suggested sign wording.

Operators should send pre-visit information to school groups before they attend the petting zoo. This provides the teacher with opportunities to enhance the educational experience of the petting zoo for children. The pre-visit information could include the types of animals and activities offered, facilities available and standard precautions to prevent disease transmission.

Eating Areas

Eating areas must be kept separate from animal contact areas and animals must be kept out of eating areas. Place signs in the designated eating areas to remind visitors to wash their hands before eating and not to feed the animals while eating.

After the visit

If a visitor becomes ill (eg diarrhoea, nausea, vomiting) after visiting a petting zoo, they should be advised to visit their doctor and explain that they have had recent contact with animals.

What if the operator wants to provide extra services?

Unpasteurised milk

Unpasteurised milk is considered by the Department of Health to be unsafe for human consumption because milk may contain pathogenic microorganisms. Pasteurisation and boiling destroys these organisms, making the milk safe for drinking. Unpasteurised or unboiled milk or milk products should not be offered for 'tasting'.

Animal food

Animal foods are not manufactured for human consumption. They may not meet the high safety standards of

Appendix 1

Index of zoonoses

Table 1

Zoonotic infections*

*Many of the gastrointestinal infections listed are

Disease	Main animal reservoir	Route of transmission	Clinical effects	Prevention
Psittacosis	Birds	Inhaling dried droppings, secretions and dust from feathers of infected birds.	Fever Headache Rash Myalgia Chills Respiratory disease	Proper hand washing and personal hygiene. Avoid disturbing birds in their enclosures, as this produces dust. Clean cages. Consider ways to reduce stress on birds
Q Fever	Cattle, Sheep and goats			

- Enjoy your visit.
- This advice is in the interest of your health and that of your family.

Directional signs, optional

Handwashing
This Way
←

Handwashing
This Way
→

Appendix 3. Handwashing.

Handwashing is arguably the single most important means of preventing the spread of infection from animal to person.

How to wash hands:

- Use soap and running water, warm to hot water is best.
- Wet hands thoroughly and lather with soap.
- Rub hands vigorously together for at least 15 seconds as you wash them.
- Pay attention to back of hands, wrists, between fingers and under fingernails.
- Rinse hands well under running water.
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Appendix 6. Web sites

Source/Date Accessed	Title
http://www.cda.gov.au/pubs/other/bat_lyssa.htm accessed 13 February 2007	Australian Bat Lyssavirus Guidelines
http://www.dh.sa.gov.au/pehs/Youve-got-what/hand-washing.htm , accessed 13 February 2007	Handwashing
http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/ais2.pdf accessed 13 February 2007	Common zoonoses in agriculture
http://www.health.qld.gov.au/phs/sphun/4751doc.pdf accessed 30 January 2001	Avoiding Ill Health when petting Farm Animals Factsheet Factsheet for the teachers and childcare personnel

