

Good hygiene goes a long way toward keeping pets, people healthy

November 13 2009

(PhysOrg.com) -- People may not be the only ones susceptible to the H1N1 virus this year - family pets also can fall victim to the influenza.

This month, a 13-year-old cat in Iowa tested positive for the H1N1 [virus](#). Two members of the cat owner's family had suffered from flu-like symptoms prior to the time the [pet](#) became ill. The cat and its owners have since recovered from their illnesses.

Ann Nieuwenhuis, Michigan State University Extension emergency planning specialist, emphasizes the importance of practicing good [hygiene](#) to minimize the risk of transmitting the virus between humans or between humans and pets.

“Taking common sense precautions to decrease the likelihood of spreading the virus goes a long way,” she said. “Wash your hands, cover your mouth when coughing and sneezing, and avoid close contact with others - people and animals - when you're ill.”

Pet owners should make sure to wash their hands before handling their pets and preparing food. It is also wise to avoid having pets sleep in the same bed as or share furniture with an ill person.

“We all know the rules for good hygiene, and because the H1N1 virus is so contagious, this year it's more important than ever to practice them diligently,” Nieuwenhuis said.

Pet owners are encouraged to contact a veterinarian if an animal begins to display behavior out of the ordinary. Animals infected with H1N1 may or may not show tangible symptoms such as [respiratory distress](#) or lethargy, so personality changes should be monitored.

Provided by Michigan State University ([news](#) : [web](#))

Citation: Good hygiene goes a long way toward keeping pets, people healthy (2009, November 13) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2009-11-good-hygiene-pets-people-healthy.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.