

Hong Kong pets face coronavirus quarantine after dog tests positive

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While there is no evidence animals such as dogs and cats can transmit the virus to humans, Hong Kong authorities say pets of infected people should be quarantined for 14 days

All pets of people in Hong Kong infected with the coronavirus will be quarantined, with one dog already in isolation, the city's authorities said Friday.

The move is the first reported case anywhere in the world of a government quarantining pets over the outbreak and was prompted by a positive test in the pet of an infected patient.

The canine has been placed in quarantine for 14 days as a precaution but has no "relevant symptoms", Hong Kong officials said Friday.

"Nasal and oral cavity samples tested weak positive for COVID-19," a government spokesman said without explaining why they tested the animal in the first place.

He said it was unclear whether the dog had actually contracted the virus or tested positive for low levels due to environmental contamination of

the dog's mouth and nose.

The animal was collected from the owner's home on Wednesday after the 60-year-old woman was diagnosed with the contagion and placed in a hospital isolation ward.

It would be closely monitored, undergo further tests and held in quarantine until it returned a negative result, authorities said.

There is no evidence domestic animals such as dogs and cats can catch the virus or transmit it to humans but the department said all pets of infected people should be quarantined and tested for the virus for 14 days.

The financial hub has confirmed 94 cases of the new coronavirus in humans, with two deaths earlier this month.

The epidemic, which emerged in central China in December, has infected more than 83,000 people globally.

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