

Appendix 13 - Animals within the hospital

The presence of pets or visiting animals is widely accepted as a useful way to enhance the quality of life for patients. However, disease can be acquired through contact with animals, especially if a person's immunity is reduced through age, illness or therapy.

Infections associated with animals

Animal	Disease
Dogs and cats	Salmonella
	Campylobacter
	Toxocara
	Toxoplasma
Birds	Chlamydia psittaci
Terrapins	Salmonella
Exotic pets, e.g. snakes, lizards, iguanas	Salmonella
Tropical fish	Salmonella
	Streptococcus iniae
	Aeromonas
	Mycobacterium marinum
Ponies, horses, donkeys	Salmonella
	Ringworm

This appendix covers the following:

- Types of animals permitted for visits
- Control and permitted behaviour of pets whilst in the hospital
- Routes of entry, exit and passage for the pet in the hospital
- Areas that pets are not allowed
- Insurance liability of owners and handlers
- Staff handling of animals whilst on duty

1. Type of animals permitted for visits (personal pets and registered therapy animals)

- All animals visiting the hospital must be pre-agreed with a head of department or member of the leadership team in advance.
- All animals visiting must be mature and house trained (e.g. no young puppies).
- Domestic animals e.g. dogs, cats, rabbits will predominately be the only animals allowed. Any additional animals must be risk assessed by leadership team or a delegated Caregiver.

2. Control and behaviour of pets whilst in the hospital

- Pets must not be fed in any clinical areas e.g. patient bedroom
- Pets must be taken outside of the main hospital area for toileting (not on terrace, tree house or sensory garden) and waste must be picked up by the owner and disposed of off-site.
- If any waste accidents occur within the hospital building or site, the owner will be responsible for cleaning the area. The owner must report the waste or mess to a member of the hospital Caregiving team. This is to ensure the owner has the correct cleaning apparatus and agents to disinfect the affected area.
- Pets are not permitted-on patient's beds.

- If a pet is planned to come into contact with furnishing or fittings e.g. a chair, then an appropriate cover should be used and removed after use. The owner will be responsible for providing and laundering the cover.
- Animals must not be permitted to lick Caregivers or patients.
- Patients who touch pets must have their hands washed/cleaned immediately afterwards following the hand hygiene protocol.
- Animals must not be allowed to come into contact with any clinical devices or equipment.
- Animal claws must be kept trimmed to reduce the incidence of scratching.
- Animal bites and scratches must be treated with the same protocols as a sharps injury.
- Any animals that do not meet the above behavioural requirements of the hospital may be asked to be removed from the premises.
- Any animal that demonstrates aggressive tendency to any one or any other animal in the hospital must be removed and will not be permitted access to the hospital.

3. Routes of entry, exit and passage for the pet in the hospital

- As with all visitors, pets/animals must enter and leave with their owner via main reception.
- As described below evidence of the animals' health and vaccination history must be provided on initial visit to main reception (or ward manager outside of core office hours).

4. Areas that pets are not allowed

- Animals are not permitted in any catering area- ward kitchens, main kitchen, dining rooms and activities servery.
- Animals should not enter a patient's bedroom without the express permission of the nurse in charge who will have sought permission from the patient themselves or a representative.
- Senior nurses/ward managers/leadership team can decline entry of an animal to a patient's bedroom if there is contraindication to the patient's medical condition e.g. suppressed immunity.

5. Insurance liability of owners and handlers

- Prior to the first visit evidence of the following must be submitted via the reception team:
 - Vaccinations
 - Flea and worming treatment
- If owners are unable to provide evidence of the above the animal will not be permitted into the hospital.
- Owners may be held liable for any injury to persons or damage to hospital property caused by their pets.

6. Caregivers handling of animals whilst on duty

- Caregivers should avoid handling or petting animals as far as possible when on duty.
- If animals are handled effective hand hygiene must be conducted as per policy immediately afterwards.
- Uniforms must not come in contact with animals. An apron should be worn if required.
- **The hospital has the right at any time to prohibit an animal from being permitted into the hospital at any time.**

Reference

Infection Prevention Control- Animals in a care home setting- Version 4 May 2025