

# Critter Visits

## Health and Safety Protocols

We have been advocates of hand washing around our animals since we first went “on the road” and continue that practice today. With the current COVID recommendations by Provincial and Federal health ministries, we have published what we feel our clients should know in advance of a booking.

**General Health in being around farm animals:** To date, there have been no reports of horses, cows, pigs, chickens, or ducks testing positive for SARS-COV-2.

**Zoonotic diseases** are infectious diseases that can be transmitted between animals and people. Some examples of germs that cause diarrheal zoonotic diseases: • Campylobacter (bacteria) • Salmonella (bacteria) • E. coli O157:H7 (bacteria) • Yersinia enterocolitica (bacteria) • Cryptosporidium (parasite). Some germs are naturally in the intestines of healthy livestock and poultry and are found in the animals’ feces. Even if an animal appears healthy, it could still pass these germs to you.

**People get sick from these germs by swallowing them.** Once the germs are on your hands, you can accidentally get them in your mouth while eating, drinking, or during other hand-to-mouth activities such as smoking or thumb sucking.

**The most common symptoms** are diarrhea and abdominal pain. Other symptoms may include vomiting, fever, cramps, and bloody diarrhea. People with mild symptoms usually recover without treatment. However, these illnesses can lead to hospitalizations and severe complications also can occur.

## To reduce risk

Wash your hands with soap and running water for at least 20 seconds upon exiting animal areas even if you did not touch an animal. Hand sanitizer may be used until you are able to wash your hands.

Wash your hands before you eat, drink, smoke, or chew (tobacco, gum, etc.). Keep food, drinks, baby bottles, pacifiers, and toys out of animal areas. **Children** younger than 5 years old should be supervised while interacting with the animals and during hand washing. Young children are more likely to get sick because they often touch surfaces contaminated with animal stool and are more likely to put their hands in their mouths. Germs can stay on the clothing and shoes you wear while interacting with animals and you can spread these germs to other people who haven’t been with the Critters.

**Visitors who experience** fever, diarrhea, nausea or vomiting **within a month after interaction** with our animals should consult a doctor.



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Children 5 years of age and younger, people with weakened immune systems, and adults over 65 years of age are more likely to get sick from the germs animals can carry, and should take extra precautions. If you forget to wash your hands after petting an animal, or bring food or drinks into an area with animals, you increase your chance of getting sick. Even animals that look clean and healthy can carry harmful germs, and areas where animals roam can be contaminated. **You don’t have to touch an animal to get sick.**

**Our Staff:** have maintained a healthy lifestyle and are free from symptoms linked to COVID.

## Ducklings at Your Location HEALTH NOTIFICATION

In very rare instances, germs from animals – specifically the fecal matter - can enter your system and can cause symptoms similar to food poisoning. As always, anytime you get sick, it is recommended that you contact your health care provider regarding your illness.

All pets, from amphibians, reptiles, dogs and cats; carry the risk of germs and bugs being ingested by humans. Ducklings should always be supervised when out of their enclosure. Take any precautions you feel appropriate for your home and sanitize areas the ducklings have been, for the safety of your family.

In our manual, we do our utmost to prepare you for waterfowl in your home. We encourage you to read this thoroughly. We want to emphasize that keeping your home clean from animal germs is important.

Your good health is critical to having duckies and for our program to continue bringing joy and never sickness. We are in the days of COVID handwashing and practices and thus we all should be well practiced at sanitizing our own “paws and claws”.

**Consider not having kiddos bathing in the same water as the ducklings. Avoid children accidentally ingesting fecal matter. It’s great to watch the ducklings swim.**

- Let the ducks be solo in the tub and have the kids outside the tub to watch.
- FLOAT a basin with water and the ducks in the tub with the kiddos. Ducks in basin, Kiddos in tub water. They will get the sense of bathing with the quackers, however the ducks are separate - in the basin - and the fecal matter will not mix with the tub water. Your children cannot accidentally ingest fecal matter.
- Use a basin, sink or kiddie pool to watch the ducklings swim

**BE SURE to clean and sanitize all areas when the ducks play outside their enclosure.**

Duck Water Dishes may also contain fecal matter. If you use your kitchen sink to rinse and fill, be sure you sanitize that area completely.

DUCK DIAPERS are a solution for stopping the loose poop around the house with ducks out of their enclosure. **More info online with Google, Pinterest or Etsy**

Remember to take health concerns relating to illness to your own medical professionals directly. Your ducklings are welcome to come back to the farm anytime you decide to conclude your fostering experience.

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