



Key Stage 2

Teacher Refresher – Animal and Farm Hygiene

Pet care

Both people and animals carry microbes. Useful microbes, such as those that live in animals' guts contribute to keeping them in good health, while harmful microbes can make them ill, just like humans.

Some infections are restricted to animals, e.g. viral infections that can lead to death, such as feline leukaemia in cats and *Parvovirus* in dogs.

Spread of infection

Certain microbes can be transmitted from animals to people and vice versa and result in infections, this is called zoonoses. Ringworm, (a dermatophyte) for example, is an infection that cats and dogs can pass on to people. All sorts of microbes can be spread through dirty hands, and therefore, washing your hands frequently e.g. after looking after or playing with a pet is so important. Conversely, spread of infection from humans to animals is also possible although less frequent: humans can transmit the influenza virus to ferrets and *Staphylococcus aureus* or *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* to dogs.

Prevention of infection

When our pets get an infection, their immune system can help them control the infection without requiring any treatment. To help its immune system to function properly, pets should be well fed with a balanced diet, get regularly dewormed with appropriate medicine, their teeth checked, and their fur brushed and checked for ticks. Pets should be washed with suitable products and provided with their own resting area and bedding, which should be regularly cleaned and disinfected. There are vaccines for animals to prevent certain severe infections such as distemper in dogs and ferrets, *parvovirus* infection, feline leukaemia and influenza, and myxomatosis in rabbits. It is therefore important to get your pet vaccinated by a vet as soon as possible.

Treatment of infections

When our pets are sick, we must take them to the vet. If the infection requires antibiotic treatment, it is important to follow the prescription carefully. Left-over antibiotics from a previous prescription should never be used. Inappropriate antibiotic use in animals leads, as it does in humans, to bacterial resistance so that the antibiotics become ineffective. To summarise, to take good care of your pet you should:

- Make sure to check your animal's general and dental hygiene, keep its resting spots clean and don't forget to wash your hands afterwards.
- Feed and de-worm your pet correctly
- See a vet to get your pet vaccinated according to the recommended schedule for the species, and in case your pet is sick
- If the vet prescribes antibiotics, make sure to follow the prescription, and in particular dosage and duration of treatment. Treatment should never be discontinued before the required date even if your pet is better or seems already cured.

Farm Hygiene

Farm animals may carry microbes that are useful and harmless to the animal but can make us very ill if they get inside our body. *Escherichia coli*, *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* are examples of some of the bacterial species that can be a cause of infection for all ages, but the symptoms can be particularly serious for young children. These bacteria are normally carried in the animal droppings and as such, may be present anywhere droppings can be found, for example on gates, fences, on the animal's face, etc. N.B. it only takes a small number of these bacteria to cause an infection.

However, there are many more useful microbes on the farm than harmful microbes. These include *Lactobacilli* that ferment silage and turn milk into yoghurt; thermophiles that break down decaying plant matter in compost; and rhizobia that change atmospheric nitrogen gas into ammonia in the soil. Some simple steps to reduce the risk of picking up an infection on a visit to a farm include:

- Washing hands with soap and water after contact with animals and before eating and drinking.
- Avoid kissing or putting your face close to the animal's face; and avoid putting your own hands near your face or in your mouth.
- Only eating in the designated picnic areas/cafe facilities.
- Not eating anything whilst walking around the farm or anything that has dropped on the floor.
- Washing soiled footwear thoroughly and then washing your hands thoroughly with soap and water.

SH1 Memory Game

Human	Animal
I'm getting vaccinated	I will vaccinate my pet
I have a vaccination record	My pet has a vaccination certificate
I got vaccinated according to guidance	I have my pet vaccinated according to the vaccine schedule of its species
I have a balanced diet with plenty of fruit and vegetables	My pet has a balanced diet adapted to its species
My immune system fights off most common infections	My pet has immune defences that fight most common infections
I wash my hands often during the day with soap and water	I wash my pet with suitable shampoos when it is dirty
I brush my teeth	I check the dental condition of my pet
When I take a walk into the forest, I check my skin and my hair for ticks	When I take a walk in the forest with my pet, I check their fur for ticks
I have useful microbes in my digestive tract that help keep me healthy	My pet has useful microbes in their digestive tract that helps keep them healthy
If I get sick, I only take antibiotics if my doctor prescribes them	If my pet gets sick, I only give them antibiotics if the vet prescribes them
I never take antibiotics from a previous treatment	I never give antibiotics from a previous treatment to my pet
If my doctor prescribes antibiotics, I finish the treatment prescribed to me	If the vet prescribes antibiotics to my pet, I give them all of the prescribed course of treatment
I will return any leftover antibiotics to my pharmacy	I will return any leftover antibiotics to my vet
I don't feed my pet while I'm cooking or eating	I let my pet eat its food from their own bowl
	I deworm my pet regularly

SW1 Animal and Farm Hygiene Quiz

When looking after pets, you should:

- Brush their teeth
- Get your pet vaccinated
- Deworm your pet regularly

Useful microbes can turn animal products into:

- Milk
- Yoghurt
- Cream
- Cheese

We can help prevent the spread of infection between animals and humans by:

- Washing our hands with soap and water after playing with animals
- Kissing or putting our face close to the animal's face
- Regularly wash pets with suitable products
- Having separate resting spots for pets that can be regularly cleaned

When visiting a farm, people should wash their hands:

- Before eating
- After petting the animals

- After touching the crops

Where should you eat your food on a farm?

- A designated picnic area/ café

If prescribed antibiotics for your pet by the vet, you should:

- Give your pet the full course of treatment
- Follow the required dosage of the prescription