



SAVA Guidelines on Practice Services during Covid-19 Lockdown

25 March 2020

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Service	Advice
Wellness visits	Postpone.
Food sales	Continue but maintain social distancing (see below), arrange delivery or use eCommerce.
Medication refills	Continue but maintain social distancing (see below), arrange drop-off or use eCommerce.
Rabies vaccination (1)	Routine vaccination (including previously unvaccinated animals) can be reasonably postponed if the owner is able to manage the animal in such a way as to minimize the risk of exposure until the animal can be vaccinated
Other vaccinations	Administer boosters of vaccine series that have started if deemed necessary based on the animal's condition and circumstances (e.g. risk of exposure). Postpone other vaccinations if the risk of exposure can be managed otherwise in the interim.
Heartworm prophylaxis	<p>If pets have been on prophylaxis in previous years, dispensing without a heartworm test is reasonable. Maintain social distancing (see below), arrange delivery or use eCommerce.</p> <p>If there are concerns about owner compliance or if prophylaxis history is unclear (or absent), risks should be discussed with the owner, but preventives can be dispensed without testing with owner consent. Visits to clinics for heartworm testing should be postponed.</p>
Flea/tick preventives	Dispense to established clients, maintaining social distancing or arranging for drop-off or delivery Establish VCPR via telemedicine for new clients prior to dispensing
Life threatening conditions	With cases from low-risk households, manage using social distancing (see below). With cases from high-risk households, determine the required PPE and whether the case can be managed at your clinic (see below for description of low vs high risk households).
Management of painful conditions	Manage by telemedicine when possible. If examination is needed and the pet is from a low-risk household, admit for examination, maintaining social distancing.
Management of chronic conditions	<p>Maintain by telemedicine when possible.</p> <p>Schedule appointment if examination is needed and a delay would lead to a reasonably likelihood of a negative patient outcome.</p>

Service	Advice
Surgical procedures for painful disorders	If the patient can be temporarily maintained on analgesics with a low risk of negative consequences, delay the surgery. If not, proceed with the surgery if household is low-risk. If household is high-risk, determine the required PPE and whether the case can be managed at your clinic, or if possible isolate the animal from any high-risk individuals for 2-3 days to minimize the risk of contamination of the haircoat and then proceed with the surgery
Other non-urgent surgical procedures	Postpone.
Routine hematologic monitoring	This should be postponed unless it is felt that a delay would substantially increase the risk of complications.
Routine faecal/urine testing	Since these samples can be collected by the owner and dropped off without social interaction, testing can be performed. Packages should be handled by personnel wearing gloves and a lab coat, and handled as potentially infectious. Containers should be wiped with a disinfectant. If containers are retained (e.g. for subsequent testing) they should be placed in a new sealable bag.
Euthanasia	Humane euthanasia should proceed, limiting social interactions as much as is reasonable while respecting the needs of the human-animal bond. Consider necessary PPE for staff if the animal is from a high-risk household.
House calls	Approach as per the individual procedures listed above, recognizing the greater risk to veterinary personnel entering a household and the need for owner risk assessment (see below). Maintain social distancing within the household as much as possible
Chemotherapy	Continue ongoing treatment while maintaining social distancing. If possible, consider alternate regimes that may spare PPE supplies (e.g. oral) if there is minimal risk of a negative impact on the animal's condition. Consider the clinical implications of delays when deciding whether to start new chemotherapy treatment regimens
Boarding, day care, grooming, and other ancillary services	Discontinue.
Sterilisations	Elective sterilisation for animals in high-risk households should not continue. Animals from low risk households could be sterilised, but maintain social distancing.

(1) Veterinarians must use their judgement in determining if the animal cannot be appropriately managed and is at increased risk of rabies exposure, and therefore routine rabies vaccination is essential. Rabies vaccination after a potential rabies exposure incident must continue to be given within 7 days if the offending animal (e.g. bat, wildlife) is not available for testing.