



# The Great Cascadia Zombie Survival Challenge

COVID-19 Edition: Pets Challenge

## Pets and COVID-19

We all have pets in our lives—our own, a family member's, or a neighbor's. They bring us great joy and comfort. They are often considered part of our families.

While we still do not know, scientists believe COVID-19 was transmitted from an animal to humans based upon past coronaviruses like MERS (from camels) and SARS (from cats). So could your pet cat or dog get sick with COVID-19? Or infect you or your family?

According to the American Veterinary Medical Association, the Centers for Disease Control, and the World Health

Organization, to date, there have not been any reports of pets or other animals becoming ill, and there is no evidence that domestic animals, including pets can spread the COVID-19 virus. With that said, it is always a good idea to keep your pet and their area clean and to wash your hands after petting your pet.

If you don't have a pet, consider contacting a family member or neighbor who does and ask them to help you earn this challenge.

Please note that scientists are continuing to monitor this issue and recommendations may change.

## Cuddles and Snuggles

Pets provide comfort in time of anxiety and change. Simply stroking your cat or dog can lower your blood pressure and make you feel calmer. Playing with your pet increases the levels of the feel-good chemicals (serotonin and dopamine) in your brain. Our pets can also increase the levels on oxytocin and decrease the production of the stress hormone cortisol. These hormonal changes help you feel more relaxed.

With your pet or your favorite stuffed animal, try a test. **Play or cuddle with your pet or**

**stuffed animal for 10 minutes and then see how you feel. Keep track of your feelings in a journal. You can make your own journal book to keep track.**

If you find yourself feeling anxious, nervous, or worried, which are all appropriate feelings during this COVID-19 pandemic, look to your pet(s) for comfort.

And don't forget, they might need a little cuddling too as our pets often feel our emotions and feelings.



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## Pet Care

Just like you, your pet(s) need care during this time. Pets are aware of our feelings and our presence. Your pet(s) are probably very happy to have you home so they can watch over you. You need to watch over them as well.

If you have not already done so, **prepare an emergency kit for your pet.**

Your kit should include:

- Veterinary and shot records.
- Food for two weeks.

- Water.
- Leash, collar or harness.
- Cat litter for two weeks.
- A photo of your pet(s).

Your pet should have identification on their collar, especially if they go outside.

It is important for your pet to get exercise every day—a walk, play ball or chase.

**Use the journal you made in step 2, to also track your pet's exercise each day.**

## Help Your Neighbors

Lots of people have pets. Whether you own a pet or not, there are probably people in your neighborhood who are not able to walk their dogs every day.

**With permission of your parent or guardian, consider offering a dog walking service for your neighbors who cannot walk their dogs because they are in a vulnerable population.**

Whether walking your dog, or your neighbor's, you will need to exercise good physical distancing during your walks. Remember to keep a six foot circle of space

between you and the nearest human.

Remember to wash your hands with soap and water for a minimum of 20 seconds before and after your walk.

If your dog is not social, you might have to walk the pets separately.

And don't forget to:

