

A Healthier You

Fairs, Zoos and You



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Exhibits such as petting zoos and agriculture fairs allow children of all ages to have the thrilling experience of coming face to face with animals. This interaction allows people to learn more about animals and helps to build an important human-animal bond.

While enjoying a visit with the animals, it is important to remember that animals sometimes carry germs that are harmful to humans.

Farm animals including cows, sheep, pigs, chickens and goats can pass diseases to people. Farm animals are not like house pets and do not have places to rest or eat that are away from where they pass manure.

Unfortunately, many people become sick every year because of a visit to an animal exhibit. When people forget to wash their hands after petting an animal or bring food into an area where animals are being housed, they are at risk for becoming ill.

However, there are a few simple precautions that you can take to ensure a safe and healthy experience.



If you are visiting an animal exhibit follow these easy guidelines:

Food and drinks

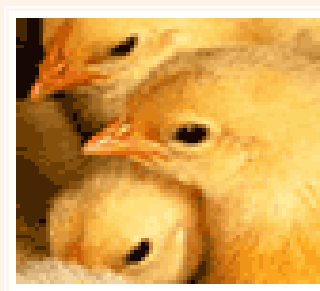
- ❖ Keep food and drinks out of animal areas.
- ❖ Do not share your food with animals.
- ❖ Do not eat or drink raw (unpasteurized) dairy products.
- ❖ Visitors should not kiss or otherwise allow their mouths to come into contact with animals or their enclosures.

Children

- ❖ Children younger than 5 years old need supervision
- ❖ Do not bring toys, pacifiers or baby bottles into the animal area.
- ❖ Never allow children to put their hands or objects (for example: toys or pacifiers) in their mouth while interacting with animals.
- ❖ Adults should carefully watch children who are visiting animals and help them wash their hands well immediately after exiting the animal area.



Very young children, the elderly, pregnant women and persons with weak immune systems should be especially careful to follow these recommendations since they are at higher risk for serious infections.



Handwashing is the single most important prevention step for reducing disease transmission.

Find out where hand-washing stations are located.

- ❖ Always wash your hands after petting animals or touching the animal cages/fences and items within the animal area such as buckets, feed and straw bedding.
- ❖ Also be sure to wash your hands with soap and water before eating and drinking.
- ❖ Avoid touching your face or mouth before washing hands.



Running water and soap are the best way to wash hands.

- ❖ Hand sanitizers are only an option if running water and soap are not available. Just be sure to wash hands with soap and water as soon as practical afterwards.



Animal manure may contain germs that can make people, especially young children, very sick. To best protect yourself from getting sick, wash your hands with soap and running water after visiting an animal exhibit and after having contact with farm animals.

About Hand Sanitizers

- ❖ Hand sanitizers may be better than nothing at all, but a good soap and water handwashing is advised.
- ❖ Hand sanitizers are most effective on clean, dry hands. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for use.
- ❖ Remember, alcohol based hand sanitizers are effective against many – but not all – harmful bacteria and viruses.
- ❖ Baby wipes and cleaning wipes ARE NOT the same as hand sanitizers.
- ❖ Before eating, hands should be scrubbed with soap and warm water for 20 seconds.

Want more information? Contact

Somerset County Department of Health
at 908-231-7155 or visit the
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
at www.cdc.gov/healthypets .

