

ZOO ANIMALS, PETTING ZOO ANIMALS, OPEN FARM ANIMALS, AND CIRCUS ANIMALS

HYGIENE AND CAUTIONS

IMPORTANT: Hygiene measures, such as hand-washing, where performed thoroughly and with correct chemicals, can significantly reduce the amount of germs on your hands but *does not* guarantee protection against becoming sick or remove the possibility of passing germs directly or indirectly to others.

Advice included here can help to *reduce* but not *eliminate* the risk of contracting illness from zoo animals, petting zoo animals, open farm animals, and circus animals.

Some zoos, petting zoos, open farms, and circuses allow public contact with animals. It is important to note that the animals, their handlers and the general environment around them including fences, stand-off barriers, seats, and other common and even remote areas can harbour germs, and even thoroughly cleaned hands can quickly become contaminated again by simple contact with any of these items.

Because visits to these centres are infrequent and exposure to animals often minimal, risks of contracting animal-linked diseases are relatively low, but must not be overlooked.

- *Children should be supervised so that they do not put their mouths close to or kiss exotic animals.*
- *Do not eat, drink or smoke whilst handling an animal.*
- *It is strongly advised that anyone handling an exotic animal or an object that may have been in contact with an exotic animal should wash their hands immediately and thoroughly afterwards. First use antibacterial soap and water, taking care to rub hands vigorously together. Second, apply an alcohol-based cleaning agent.*
- *If you touch any exotic animal, avoid further touching your hair, clothes (including pockets), doors and other items (including car doors and steering wheels and gear change levers) until you have thoroughly cleansed your hands.*
- *Thoroughly cleaning hands is particularly important before touching or feeding a baby or young child. Not to do so would pose a strong health risk to the infant.*
- *Local authorities, doctors, vets facility managers should advise their patients and customers of the health risks associated with visiting zoos, petting zoos and open farms and should provide appropriate health protection advice.*