



## **How to care for your donkeys or mules if you become ill or must self-isolate due to Covid-19.**

As Covid-19 continues to spread, the impact of the virus is being felt by many communities around the world. Governments and health authorities are the best sources of advice, providing measures people should take to reduce transmission and risk of infection in their areas. Here in Ireland the most recent advice can be found at <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/coronavirus.html>

The care and welfare of our donkeys are always our priority and we know that our guardians feel the same. We know that many of you may be worried about how best to continue to care for your donkeys and how to comply with the most recent Government measures announced on Friday 27th March 2020. We understand that this is an unsettling time especially for those with a higher risk of becoming seriously unwell, for those needing to self-isolate, for those who are unwell and for those who are living with or caring for someone in these groups.

We too have had to adapt to the rapidly changing situation and have had to make significant changes to the way we work but we want to reassure you that we are still here for you. Our welfare team will continue to be available to offer support and guidance.

In the meantime, we have put together some information to address those frequently asked questions and to provide some general guidance. We recognise that each situation will be different and you may have additional considerations. Please do contact your Donkey Welfare Adviser or welfare office on 022 49013 or via email [info@thedonkeysanctuary.ie](mailto:info@thedonkeysanctuary.ie) if you want to discuss any aspects of your donkey's care. These are unprecedented times and our advice during

this time may not be our usual approach, but we will continue to do our best to support you and your donkeys.

## **Further Guidance and FAQs**

### Prepare and Plan:

Taking sensible precautions, thinking ahead and developing contingency plans will help reduce stress and worry should your circumstances change. Below are some tips to help you think about what you may need to do in different scenarios. All good plans are subject to change, so you should be aware that your plans may need to be adapted as government advice can change rapidly. It is important to keep up to date and we recommend that you continue to check the most recent government advice and news reports for updates in your area.

### **If you are well and your donkeys are kept at home:**

#### **DO**

- ✓ Continue to interact with your donkeys as normal.
- ✓ Apply good hygiene and biosecurity practices including washing hands thoroughly with soap and water before and after touching your animals.
- ✓ Wear gloves or wash hands thoroughly before and after handling tools and equipment. This is particularly important where there is shared use e.g. wheelbarrows, field gates.
- ✓ Ensure you have enough supplies of bedding and forage. Place orders in advance of these running out to allow for unforeseen delays.
- ✓ Check current supplies of essential medication and speak to your veterinary practice to ensure requests for repeat prescriptions are made in good time.
- ✓ Ask any visitors to follow good hygiene measures. This includes your vet, farrier, equine dental technician and other professionals.
- ✓ Speak to your Donkey Welfare Adviser if you have any concerns or worries.
- ✓ Develop plans to ensure your donkeys are cared for in the event you became ill or need to self-isolate.

- ✓ Consider adapting your donkeys' usual routine now so their management is realistic for those who may need to care for them if you are unable to do so.

**If you need to self-isolate or find yourself unable to attend to your donkeys:**

**DO**

- ✓ Remember it is important to look after your own health and wellbeing.
- ✓ Let us know - your Donkey Welfare Adviser can provide advice and support your planning.
- ✓ Carefully consider if you are well enough to care for them yourself.
- ✓ If you need to arrange for another person to care for donkeys at your address it is important that this is kept to a minimum and they have access without meeting anyone who is unwell or self-isolating.
- ✓ Adapt your donkey's usual routine to suit their needs and be realistic for those caring for them during this period.
- ✓ Think creatively about how you can monitor them remotely – we have seen novel use of CCTV cameras and other monitoring equipment.
- ✓ Make sure that contact details of your vet, farrier and other professionals are available to those caring for your donkeys and that they know who to contact in an emergency.
- ✓ Consider additional enrichment opportunities which will help keep your donkeys entertained during this period – you may find this resource useful:

<https://view.pagetiger.com/EnvironmentalEnrichmentforDonkeys/EnvironmentEnrichmentfordonkeys>

**If you have been diagnosed with Covid-19:**

**DO**

- ✓ Stay at home. You must not leave your house, unless you are being moved to hospital.
- ✓ Remember it is important to look after your own health and wellbeing.

- ✓ Let us know - your Donkey Welfare Adviser can provide advice and support your planning.
- ✓ If your donkeys are kept at your address it is vital the person caring for your donkeys has access without meeting anyone who is ill or self-isolating.
- ✓ Be realistic about the level of care your donkeys will receive during this period and adapt their usual routine accordingly.
- ✓ Think creatively about how you can monitor your donkeys remotely – we have seen novel use of CCTV cameras and other monitoring equipment

## **FAQs**

### **Q: What do I do if my donkeys are not kept at home?**

A: Travel to provide basic care to your donkeys should be considered 'essential' travel, however, please take steps to limit travel as far as possible and comply with all other government advice, especially around social distancing and hygiene practices.

Action: It is important to develop contingency plans in case further travel restrictions are implemented, or there is a change in your own circumstances. The advice in the guidance above may help you do this and remember to contact your Donkey Welfare Adviser if you need advice. Consider friends or family who may be able to care for your donkeys if you are unable to. Contact other donkey, horse or pony owners in the local area and develop shared contingency plans and share emergency contact details.

### **Q: How will the restriction on non-essential travel impact on my vet and other professionals?**

A: Vets and other professionals such as farriers and equine dentistry technicians will continue to provide treatment in an emergency. Official bodies such as Veterinary Ireland are providing professionals with guidance as they make necessary changes to their usual services to comply with the latest advice. This may include cancellation of routine work; adopting remote solutions to triage cases and strict guidance to protect staff and owners. There may also be delays in the supply of some medications.

Action: Keep a look out for updates from your vet and other professionals for changes to their services and follow any advice they issue in relation to non-urgent cases.

**Q: What do I do if my donkey's medication is running low and I need a repeat prescription?**

A: Speak to your vet and order repeat prescriptions in good time. Please bear in mind that vets are making changes to their usual services as they respond to the latest government advice. There may be longer waiting times for deliveries and challenges with the supply of some medications.

Action: Work out how long your donkey's current supply will last, make a note on your calendar and set an early reminder to make sure you don't forget to give your vet a call.

**Q: What do I do if my donkeys are due their vaccinations?**

A: Contact your vet for advice in good time. Please bear in mind that vets are making changes to their usual services as they respond to the latest government advice. This may include the delay of non-emergency veterinary care such as vaccinations.

Action: If changes to veterinary services result in your donkey's vaccinations lapsing during this period, please make a note and let your Donkey Welfare Adviser know. We will provide further advice on how best to address missed vaccines as soon as services are back to normal.

**Q: What do I do if it is time for my donkey's worm egg counts?**

A: As we concentrate our efforts on caring for those donkeys in highest need on our sanctuary sites, we are sadly unable to offer routine worm egg counts via our lab currently.

Action: Please speak to your vet if you require advice about worming. Please bear in mind that vets are making changes to their usual services as they respond to the latest government advice so you may not be able to speak to a vet directly.

**Q: Will I still be able to buy feed and supplies?**

A: Shops and animal feed stores are currently open for trading but wherever possible we recommend that you use a delivery service to limit non-essential travel.

Action: Identify what supplies you need. Remember to order in good time to account for delays in supply. Only order what you need. If you do need to travel to a shop, call ahead to check that they have what you need to avoid unnecessary journeys. Practice good hygiene and social distancing at all times.

**Q. Can I still take my donkeys out for a walk?**

A: Currently there is no official guidance on what activities can be included as your daily exercise. Walking with your donkeys is a great way to provide exercise and enrichment opportunities but at this time it is important for us all to avoid taking any unnecessary activity that may place additional burden on the emergency services.

Action: Consider other ways in which you can offer your donkeys opportunities for exercise and mental stimulation. You may find this resource useful:

<https://view.pagetiger.com/EnvironmentalEnrichmentforDonkeys/EnvironmentEnrichmentfordonkeys>

**Q: What do I do if I can no longer be a guardian for my rehomed donkeys?**

A: Please speak to your Donkey Welfare Adviser or contact our welfare office.

**Q: What do I do if I can no longer afford to care for my rehomed donkeys?**

A: Please speak to your Donkey Welfare Adviser or contact our welfare office.