



Animals & Field Trips

• Public Health & Safety Tips •

Having the chance to interact with animals can be a wonderful learning experience, both for children and adults. However, healthy animals carry bacteria that can sometimes make people sick. Most people don't get sick from touching animals, but some people — the very young, the very old, pregnant women and people of any age with compromised immune systems — are at some risk of getting sick from bacteria from animals.

If you will be visiting a farm or place where you will be having contact with animals, there are a few simple precautions you can take to prevent illness.

Educate your chaperones:

- Healthy animals can carry bacteria that can sometimes make people sick.
- Young children under 5 years of age, elderly people, pregnant women and people of any age with compromised immune systems are more likely to get sick from these bacteria. They should avoid any contact with reptiles and amphibians.
- Washing hands well with soap and running water, or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer after petting or touching animals can prevent illness.

Promote hand washing:

- Use hand washing facilities and/or hand sanitizers or bring your own hand sanitizers. (Young children will need supervision.)
- Remind or assist students to wash hands well after interacting with animals.

Handwashing posters are available from the Vermont Department of Health - call 802-863-7240 or toll-free 800-640-4374 (in VT).

Promote food safety:

- Eat and drink in an area that is well apart from where people and animals interact.
- If feeding animals, use only animal food. Do not allow students to feed "people food" to animals.
- Do not consume or allow students to consume raw (unpasteurized) dairy products.

