



BIRD AND EXOTIC ANIMAL HOSPITAL

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THE KISS OF DEATH....

Herpes Simplex Virus 1 and your pet marmoset

Herpes Simplex Virus 1 (HSV 1) is the virus that causes fever blisters or cold sores in humans. More than 80% of the human population are infected with this virus. Many people do not know that they are infected and may not ever have fever blisters/cold sores. HSV 1 is for life- once a person is infected they remain so for life. When HSV1 is not active and replicating it lies dormant in your trigeminal nerve- one of the nerves that supplies your face. The virus is shed in fluid from fever blisters and also saliva- you don't have to have fever blisters to be shedding the virus!! People most commonly shed the virus when they are immunocompromised, for example when sick or stressed.

HSV 1 is readily passed onto marmosets and is fatal if untreated!

Marmosets catch HSV 1 from contact with saliva from a person that is shedding the virus or from people with fever blisters.

KISSING your pet, allowing them to take food from your mouth or giving them access to anything you have had in your mouth is the most common way of transmitting the virus!!

Once your pet is infected the disease is rapidly fatal if left untreated.

Only about 30-50% of animals that are treated will survive.

The treatment is still in the experimental stages and extremely costly!!

How to minimise the chance of your pet being infected?

Do Not Kiss your pet!

Do Not allow your pet to take food from your mouth or have any contact with items you have had in your mouth.

If you have fever blisters/cold sores – do not have any contact with your pet

If you are suffering from a cold or feel unwell- do not have any contact with your pet.

Make sure you wash your hands before handling any food for your pet.

Children often shed HSV 1 in saliva without any fever blisters.

What signs may alert you that your pet has HSV 1?

The most common initial signs are:

Decreased appetite

Dull, Lethargic, quiet or just not quite itself.

Diarrhoea

High fever

As the disease progresses you may also see:

Red, swollen lips or white blisters on inside of gums–fever blisters

Seizures

Droopy face, unable to blink properly

What should you do if you suspect your pet may be infected?

Take him/her straight to your veterinary clinic! –This disease is life-threatening and a few hours can make the difference between life and death.

Advise the Vet you are concerned about HSV 1 infection.

Tell the vet if you kiss your pet, feed it from your mouth or if any member of the family have recently been ill or had fever blisters.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any further questions!!