

All 4 Paws Animal Hospital Phase 2 Reopening Protocol

Governor Cooper announced that we are moving into Phase 1 reopening Friday, May 8th at 5pm (<https://governor.nc.gov/news/governor-extends-stay-home-order-through-may-8-plans-three-phase-lifting-restrictions-based>). Part of this reopening is getting rid of the essential and non-essential designations which means **starting Monday May 11th All 4 Paws Animal Hospital can return to full service. However, during this phase we are still to limit gatherings to 10 people and stay 6 feet apart, which we can only achieve by continuing 100% curbside service (procedure below).** Only euthanasia's will still be performed in the building, with a limit of 2 owners being present and all parties must wear a face covering.

NO changes have been made to our operating protocols for Phase 2 vs Phase 1 based on ongoing guidelines.

Steps for Curbside Service are as Follows:

- 1) Call us at 919-267-9315 when you arrive in our parking lot for your pet's scheduled appointment.
- 2) An assistant will get the history over-the-phone then will come get your pet. **Please ensure all cats are confined in a carrier and all dogs are wearing a collar and leash to ensure no pets are able to escape when we open the car door to collect them.**
- 3) The vet will do an exam and then call you discuss findings and go over any treatment plans.
- 4) You can pay by credit card over the phone, or we can come to your car to collect payment from you.
- 5) We will bring your pet back out to your car at the end of the visit.

Since the most likely risk of transmission occurs when spending 10 minutes or more with an infected person, this should keep all of us safe!

We will reassess once Phase 2 is announced (hopefully 2 weeks after Phase 1) on whether we will be able to start offering in-hospital appointments again but I am certain there will at least be screening questions and face covering requirements at that time. Also, please be aware, the Governor has reserved the right to reverse the re-openings at any time should the COVID-19 infection rate go up rapidly again, so we must all remain flexible at this time and be prepared to go back on stay-at-home orders at any moment.

You can still call ahead for medication refills – we will call you when they are ready to go. **Please give us at least 72 hours' notice of when you need medication refills** as many shipments have been arriving later than normal. Call us on arrival for medication pickup and we will check you out over the phone then bring the medication out to you.

Finally, please remember **the North Carolina Veterinary Board considers telemedicine for new patients or new issues illegal** and they are the superseding governing body of veterinarians in North Carolina so even though the FDA and other organizations have deemed telemedicine ok for almost all situations during this pandemic, we have very strict limitations still in place. For a veterinarian to practice medicine (this includes telemedicine) in the State of North Carolina they need to first

establish a veterinary-client-patient-relationship (VCPR). A VCPR is established only when a veterinarian examines an animal in person, and is maintained by regular veterinary visits as needed to monitor an animal's health. If a VCPR is established but a veterinarian does not regularly see the animal afterward, the VCPR is no longer valid and it is considered illegal and unethical for a veterinarian to dispense or prescribe medications or recommend treatment without recently examining the patient. A young healthy animal may only need to be seen once a year to establish a VCPR. However, an older animal will require more frequent examinations to ensure their health status. An animal with new or existing health problems such as epilepsy, heart disease, renal disease, etc. will require more frequent examinations to maintain a valid VCPR. A valid VCPR cannot be established online (virtually), via email, or over the phone. However, once a VCPR is established, it may be able to be maintained between medically necessary examinations via telephone or other methods; but it's up to the veterinarian's discretion to determine if this is appropriate and in the best interests of an animals' health.

Thank you for your cooperation and understanding during this time. Together we can continue to slow the spread of COVID-19. **If you have any questions, please call (919-267-9315) or email us (clientservices@apexvethospital.com).**

Sincerely,

The Doctors and Staff of All 4 Paws Animal Hospital