

Animal Safety Steps for Kids!

Visiting fairs, petting zoos, and family farms are a fun way for kids and their families to learn about animals. However, some farm animals may be harboring bacteria or parasites that can be spread to people and cause illness. The disease-causing agents are often shed in manure and contaminate water troughs, fencing, and bedding. The risk of catching a disease from animals can be reduced by following some simple steps. That way, you can be safe but still have fun playing and working with animals.

The Oklahoma State Department of Health recommends the following preventative practices:

Ask before touching!

- Always ask permission to touch an animal that is not your own, or unfamiliar to you.
- Mother animals can be very protective of their babies. Ask an adult if it is okay to touch or pick up any baby animal if its mother is nearby.
- If an animal looks sick to you, don't touch it - and tell an adult.

When around animals...

- Do not stand directly behind large animals or nervous calves or foals.
- Never yell or talk very loud around animals, they could become frightened and kick or bite.
- Do not ride a horse without an adult present.
- Keep you palm and fingers flat and extended if hand feeding an animal.

Smart handling of Animals -

- Do not take food or drink in the animal areas.
- Do not kiss the animals.
- Do not put your fingers or any other item like pens, rope, etc. in your mouth while handling animals.
- Do not wear sandals or walk barefoot in animal pens.

Clean-up Time!

- If clothes become dirty from animal waste, change out of them before wearing them in your house.
- Kids that regularly handle and clean-up after livestock should have a separate pair of shoes they only wear outside.
- Scrape or hose off manure from the bottom of shoes.
- ALWAYS wash your hands with soap and water after touching animals and before eating.

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For further information call or visit us on the World Wide Web
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