

Zoonotic diseases present a risk to all personnel involved in caring for and interacting with animals. Instigating basic infection control practices (standard precautions and transmission based precautions) reduces the level of risk for all staff. Women who are pregnant or trying to conceive are more susceptible to some diseases. This is important because the number of female veterinarians entering the profession continues to rise and the majority of veterinary nurses are female [1, 2].

Employers have a responsibility to promote workplace health and safety for staff, animals and clients. Employees also have a duty of care with promoting best and safe practice [3].

These guidelines identify zoonotic diseases that can be contracted in Queensland. Zoonotic diseases of particular concern to pregnant women are listed separately. They are categorised according to small, large or exotic animals, with species listed for each group. Recommended infection control practices are provided for each disease. Indirect transmission via food and water is not specifically discussed. See the [CDC website](#) for further information. Major forms of disease transmission are listed with suggested precautions available in downloadable poster format. Additional disease information is provided in a link, with Australian information provided when available.

The guidelines do not include the level of risk to the individual and do not extend to those working in research / laboratory areas. Risk profiles will need to be considered for each individual.

Seeking medical attention early is recommended if an individual is concerned about contracting a zoonotic disease or after an injury, such as a dog bite, as these can become fulminant within hours.

Read in conjunction with the [Australian Veterinary Association 2017 Guidelines for Veterinary Personal Biosecurity](#) and [Guidelines for veterinarians handling potential Hendra virus infection in horses Version 5.1](#).

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Disclaimer

These guidelines aim to combine a review of the available evidence with current clinical practice. They are designed to provide information based on the evidence available at the time of publication to assist in preparation of personal biosecurity plans and decision-making. The Australian Veterinary Association gives no warranty that the information contained in this document and any online updates available on the AVA website are correct or complete.

Infection prevention and control guidelines are necessarily general and are not intended to be a substitute for a veterinarian's professional judgment in each case. The Australian Veterinary Association shall not be liable for any loss whatsoever whether due to negligence or otherwise arising from the use of or reliance on this document.

1. Veterinary Nurses Council of Australia, *Gender breakdown of veterinary nurses in Queensland*. 2019.
2. Commonwealth of Australia. *Veterinary Nurses*. 2019 [cited 2019 28 October 2019]; Available from: <https://joboutlook.gov.au/Occupation?search=alpha&code=3613>.
3. Workplace Health and Safety - Work Cover Queensland. *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*. 2018 2 July 2018 [cited 2019 22 July 2019]; Available from: <https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/laws-and-compliance/workplace-health-and-safety-laws/laws-and-legislation/work-health-and-safety-act-2011>.