

CONTACT: Ana Bustilloz @ 323-730-5300, ext. 252 or 323-707-1271 cell

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Feeling fluish? Wash your hands before you pet your dog

spcaLA offers best tools to prevent infecting your pets amid a widespread flu

Los Angeles, CA – Reports today indicate that many US states are experiencing a high level of influenza activity, and *The New York Times* reported that federal health officials confirmed that “flu deaths officially crossed into ‘epidemic’ territory Friday.”

Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Los Angeles (**spcaLA**) urges pet owners to take precautions against infecting their beloved pets this flu season.

“Even though our natural inclination when we’re feeling under the weather is to have a good snuggle with our pets that may not be in their best interest,” said spcaLA President, Madeline Bernstein. “In 2009, we learned that we can infect our pets with the flu, when a cat – and later several dogs – was infected with H1N1.”

If you become sick, practice good hygiene – wash your hands before handling your pets and their food, keep tissues at the ready and try to maintain your distance from Fido and Fluffy until you are feeling better.

Symptoms of the flu in pets include a runny nose, sneezing or wheezing, loss of appetite, and lethargy. If your pet exhibits these symptoms, or you feel he may be ill, contact your veterinarian.

There is no vaccination for pets against our current human flu strain, but it is recommended to keep your pets up-to-date on vaccines for common pet ailments.

For more info, please contact Ana Bustilloz at abustilloz@spcaLA.com or 323-730-5300 x252 or cell 323-707-1271.

spcaLA is an independent, nonprofit animal welfare organization serving Southern California since 1877. There is no national SPCA, parent organization, or umbrella group that provides financial support to spcaLA. Donations run programs and services include Cruelty Investigation, the Disaster Animal Response Team, Humane Education, and a variety of shelter services.