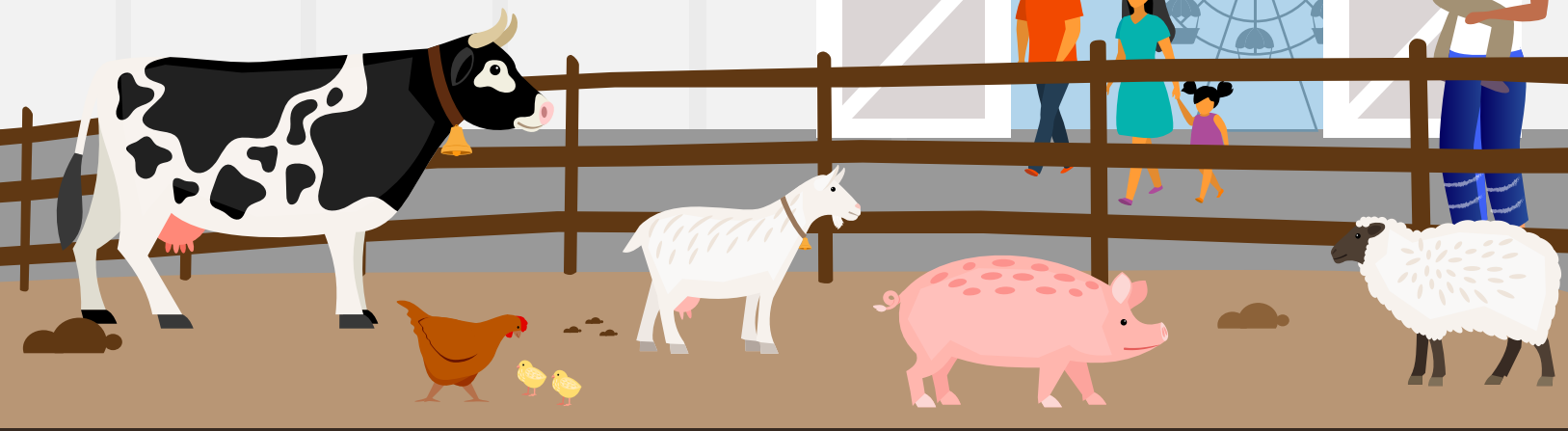


Take Care at the Fair

Germs from animal poop can make you sick!



Fairs and petting zoos are great places for people to learn about animals. But animals can carry germs that can make people very sick. Many of these dangerous (and even deadly) germs are in an animal's poop.

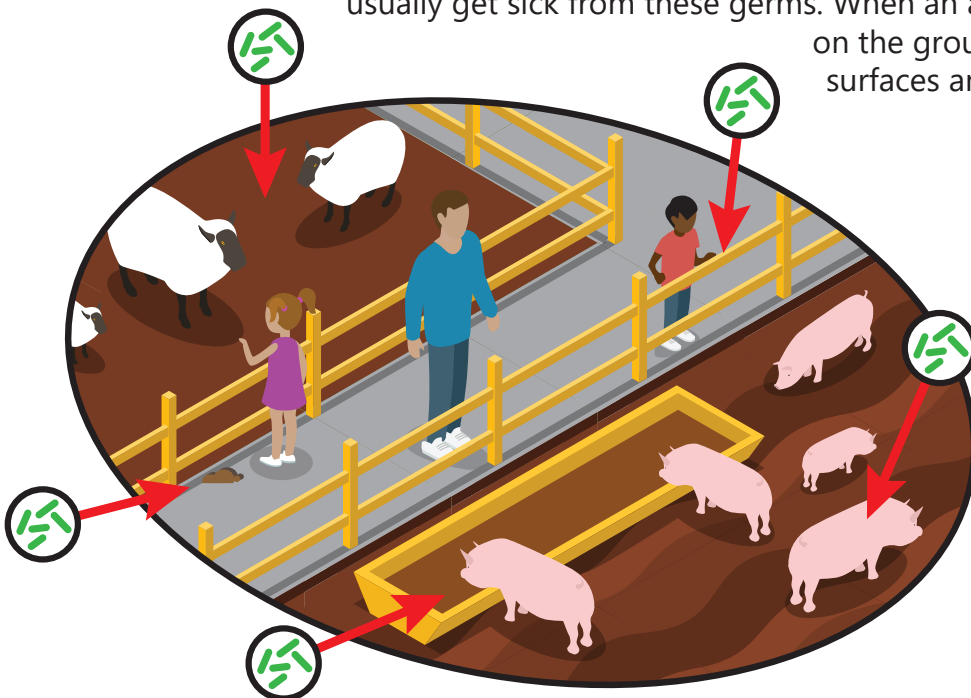
Animals at a fair or petting zoo can leave their poop anywhere. When you visit a fair or petting zoo, it's likely that you will come in contact with animal poop and the germs inside, even if you can't see or smell it.

Where do animal germs come from, and are they common at petting zoos and fairs?

Many germs naturally live in the guts of animals, especially farm animals such as cows, pigs, sheep, goats, and chickens.

You can't tell by looking if an animal is carrying these germs because animals don't usually get sick from these germs. When an animal poops, these poop germs land on the ground where they can be easily spread to surfaces and areas around the animal, including:

- Fences, railings, or cages of an animal pen
- Animal feed bins, water troughs, and bedding
- The ground inside and outside of an animal's pen (including straw, dirt, and concrete)



Animal poop can be on *anything* in an animal exhibit, including the animals themselves!

Why should I care about germs at a fair or petting zoo?

Germs from animal poop can cause vomiting, diarrhea, and stomach pain in people. Some people, especially children, can get very sick and may need to be hospitalized. People have even died from germs in animal poop.

How do people get sick from animal germs?

People can get sick by touching something that is contaminated with animal poop and then touching their eyes, nose, or mouth. Poop germs can easily get inside your mouth while eating, drinking, or touching your face. Most of us touch our faces or put our fingers in our mouths without even thinking about it.

How can I tell if something is contaminated with animal poop germs?

You can't! Germs are too small to see. Even if an animal area looks clean, it can still be filled with germs that can make you sick. When visiting animals at the fair, you may touch, rub against, or walk in areas where there is animal poop and get germs on your hands, clothes, and shoes without even knowing it.

What can I do to protect myself and my family from animal poop germs at a fair or petting zoo?

Be aware of where you are and what you are doing:

BEFORE entering animal areas:

- Put away all food, drinks, baby bottles, pacifiers, and toys.

WHILE in animal areas:

- Supervise young children at all times.
- Remember that animals, railings, and other surfaces can be covered with germs. If you touch these surfaces, keep your fingers and hands away from your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Keep all food and other objects out of your mouth.

AFTER leaving animal areas, **WASH YOUR HANDS!**

- Wash with soap and running water for at least 20 seconds after visiting animal areas (even if you didn't touch any animals) **and** before you eat, drink, or put anything in your mouth.



Should I even go to a petting zoo or visit an animal exhibit at the fair?

It depends! Pregnant women, older adults (65 years and older), children under the age of 5, and people with health problems or weakened immune systems are more likely to get sick from animal germs, so it may be best not to visit animal exhibits if you or someone you care for is in one of these groups.

Learn more:

