



Text: Dr Jan du Preez | Photography: Supplied

What is **ZOONOSIS?**

The disease-link between pets and humans

A zoonosis is any disease or infection naturally transmissible from vertebrate animals to humans and vice versa
(Photo credits: Cow and pig heads: T Botha. Sable: D Visser. Photo graphics: Ilana Kemp)

Have you ever heard the term zoonosis and wondered what it is, or how it affects pet owners? This is the first of a series of articles to unwrap the essence of zoonosis and the impact it has on our daily lives.

In its broad sense, the term zoonosis means a disease of animals, particularly of vertebrates and therefore also of humans. Prof Rudolph Virchow (Germany) was the first to use the term zoonosis in the sense of a disease or infection which is naturally transmissible between vertebrate animals and humans.

Contracting zoonoses

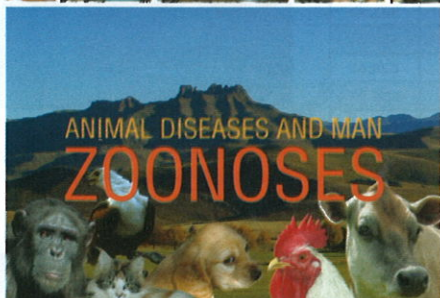
More than 200 zoonoses of various types are recognised worldwide. Zoonoses can be caused by a range of disease-causing agents (pathogens), such as viruses, bacteria, fungi, protozoa, helminths, rickettsias and parasites; of the 1,415 pathogens known to infect humans, 61% are zoonotic.

Statistical data indicate that 10 to 15% (more than one billion people globally) or more of the human population will pick up a zoonotic infection at some stage of their lives. World population was estimated during June 2017 at 7.5 billion.

Humans acquire the zoonotic infections by direct contact with infected animals, inhalation, by indirect contact via contaminated objects, eating food or drinking water or milk derived from or contaminated by infected animals, or by the bites of bloodsucking invertebrates like ticks, fleas, mosquitoes and flies.

Fortunately, there are things you can do to protect yourself and your children from zoonotic diseases. Many have been known to exist for a long time, and methods to prevent them have been developed, for example pasteurisation of milk to protect people from

To win a copy of the book on zoonoses, turn to page 69, or buy the book on www.coolmags.co.za.



TIME TO WIN

You can win a copy of Dr Jan du Preez's book, *Animal diseases and man - Zoonoses*, by sending your questions related to zoonoses and your contact details to animaltalk@panorama.co.za before 31 March 2018.

This is Sammy, *Animaltalk*'s editorial assistant. He has a lifetime's experience in everything dog related, and his area of expertise is definitely food! He is here to share some of his favourite doggy stuff.



ANIMAL DISEASES AND MAN - ZOO NOSES

If you are interested to find out more about zoonoses and how it links diseases between animals and humans, this is the book for you. Author Dr Jan du Preez, who has been studying zoonoses for most of his life, explains the details you may want to know in this book.

The book starts off with an introduction of what zoonoses is, and discusses occupational diseases, environmental impacts, human-animal relationships, social and physical benefits of pets, urbanisation and HIV, AIDS and zoonoses. Dr du Preez then goes into much detail about the various causes of zoonoses. Although zoonoses causes various diseases in humans due to pets, the author never discourages readers to have pets. In fact, he encourages people to have pets, but just to be aware of how zoonoses works and how it transmits diseases between animals and humans. Read more about zoonoses on page 54.

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