Visiting the Zoo during COVID-19

National Zoo Social Narrative

Smithsonian National Zoological Park Conservation Biology Institute
Today, I am going to visit the Zoo. Today’s trip may be different from other times I have visited the Zoo. This is because the Zoo has made some changes to help keep me and my family safe.
During my visit to the Zoo, there are some **new rules** I will need to follow, in order to stay safe.

- ✓ I will practice **social distancing** and stay away from other Zoo visitors
- ✓ I will keep my **mask on**
- ✓ I will remember to **wash or sanitize** my hands to keep germs away.

I may see signs reminding me of these rules.
When it’s time to enter the Zoo, I may need to **wait in line** with other people. I will see **blue dots** on the ground that tell me where to stand, so I’m not too close to other visitors.
When I get to the front of the line, I will hold up my ticket to the scanner. I can ask for help from the people behind the desk, if I need it.
Inside the Zoo, I may see **signs** that tell me how to walk safely down each path.

Some paths will be **one-way** only, so I may need to take a different route to see the animals.
I may notice that some areas of the Zoo*, including some exhibit buildings, are closed. If I don’t get to visit my favorite animal today, that’s okay – there are many other animals I can see.

Caregivers: for an up-to-date list of closures, please visit https://nationalzoo.si.edu/visit/welcome-back-zoo
Some other parts of the Zoo, like statues and photo cut-outs, might also be **blocked off** to keep Zoo visitors healthy. I may see **signs** that remind me not to touch these items.
Another way I can keep germs away is by practicing **social distancing**, which means staying one zebra-length (6 feet) away from other Zoo visitors. I may notice different signs and reminders to stay apart from other visitors.
It’s important to keep my hands clean and free of germs. I can use sinks in the restroom or hand sanitizer pumps located throughout the Zoo to keep my hands clean.
As I explore the Zoo, it's important that I stay close to my family or group, but away from people I don’t know. This way, I will stay safe and have fun.
If I need help, or am separated from my family or group, I can find a Zoo staff member, like the ones pictured below.

Zoo Police may be walking or riding in vehicles. Other Zoo staff may be wearing uniforms, name tags, or badges.
If I need help but can't find a staff member, I can call the Zoo Police by pressing the button on the emergency call box. Sometimes, I may also hear important announcements coming from the call box, like when the Zoo is closing.
I may see different kinds of barriers that will help keep me safe during my visit.

It's important for me to not cross these barriers.

One kind of barrier I might see is a railing.

Another type of barrier I might see is a fence.

I might also see a glass window helping me to stay in the right place.
If it's too crowded, there are different areas where I can stop and take a break. One area is the path behind the Small Mammal House.
Another place where I can take a break is the boardwalk behind the Reptile Discovery Center.
If I get tired, I can stop and sit on one of the benches found around the Zoo.

If I get hot, I can run through one of the misters that sprays water.
Even though my trip to the Zoo may be different from other times I have visited, I can still have a fun and safe time with my friends or family!