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 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!