

normally come out only at night. Report animals suspected of being rabid to your local health office. **7. Don't leave food for pets outside; it will encourage raccoons and other wildlife to come near your dwelling.** Make sure garbage can lids are on tight to prevent wildlife from being attracted to a free meal. Be sure areas under the house are closed up so wildlife cannot enter. **8. Keep bats out of places with a high risk of bat contact with humans or pets by closing or covering openings.**

Are rabid bats a threat to human health?

Yes. During the 1990s, two children died in New York State from bat-associated rabies. Although in each case, there was some indication of potential bat contact, exposures were not reported. These tragedies have resulted in more aggressive recommendations regarding the need for rabies postexposure treatment following bat encounters.

Because bat bites may sometimes go undetected, rabies postexposure treatment should be considered when there is a reasonable probability that an exposure has occurred; for example, when there is skin contact with a bat or a bat is found in close proximity to sleeping persons, unattended children, or persons with mental impairment.

Rabies in bats in New York State is geographically widespread, and has been identified in all of New York's nine species of bats. In bats tested because of human or pet encounters, 3-4% are determined to be rabid.

What should I do if I encounter a bat?

First, determine if there is a possibility of human, pet or livestock contact with a bat. If such a possibility exists, capture the bat without touching it and without damaging its head.

To capture a bat, close the room and closet doors and the windows, turn on lights if the room is dark, and wait for the bat to land. Wearing gloves, cover the bat with a coffee can or similar container. Slide a piece of cardboard under the can trapping the bat. Tape the cardboard tightly to the can. Immediately contact your local health department to arrange for rabies examination of the bat.

If the test results are positive for rabies, or if the bat cannot be captured or brought to the laboratory immediately, postexposure treatment must be administered as soon as possible to those persons with a reasonable probability of exposure.

Treatment begins with a single dose of human rabies-immune globulin and includes five doses of rabies vaccine beginning with one dose administered at the same time as the immune globulin, and additional single doses given 3, 7, 14 and 28 days later.

What if I am exposed?

If you are bitten or scratched by a wild animal or get saliva from a rabies-suspect animal into an open wound or onto a mucous membrane, wash the wound thoroughly with soap and water and seek medical attention immediately.

Try to capture the animal without damaging its head; it is the head scientists will test to determine whether the animal had rabies. Don't kill the animal unless it is wild or cannot be captured alive and therefore might endanger others. Preserve the dead animal by refrigeration as soon as possible.

Disinfect any surface contaminated with tissues or fluids from a rabies-suspect animal with a 10 percent solution of household bleach in water. Report bites, scratches or bat incidents to the local health office immediately; they will tell you what to do with the animal.

If the rabies-suspect animal cannot be observed or tested, or is found to be rabid, treatment of the exposed individual must begin immediately.

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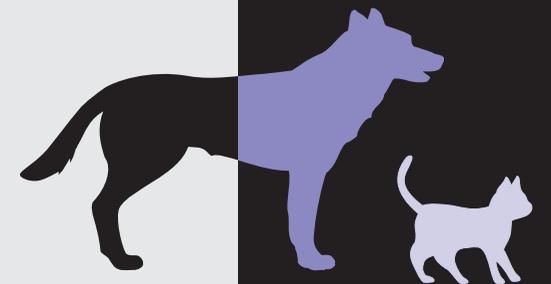
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Rabies...



It KILLS

and it's here in
New York State



RABIES could affect
the health of you and
your pets.



What is Rabies?

Rabies is a viral infection that affects the nervous system (brain and spinal cord) of mammals, including humans. It is usually transmitted by an infected animal's bite. The incubation period—the period between exposure to the disease and onset of symptoms ranges from two weeks to many months. Rabies is almost always fatal once symptoms occur. Prompt rabies treatment following a bite can prevent rabies in humans. Up-to-date vaccinations in dogs, cats and livestock, prior to exposure, can protect these animals against the disease.

Is Rabies a threat in New York State?

Yes! Raccoon rabies has been confirmed in nearly every county in New York and has spilled over into other wildlife and unvaccinated domestic animals. Bat rabies has been reported since the late 1950s throughout the state and has been the cause of almost all of the reported human rabies deaths in the U.S. in the past 20 years.

How is Rabies transmitted?

Rabies is most often transmitted by the bite of a rabid animal. The virus may



also be transmitted by contamination of a scratch, open wound or mucus membrane.

Animals most likely to be infected with rabies in the United States are raccoon, skunk, bat, fox, dog and cat. Rabies may also spread to farm animals, opossum, weasels and other wild carnivores. Rodents are at lower risk. Squirrels, rats and mice are generally not infected. Other animals at risk include pets caged outdoors such as rabbits.



What are the signs of Rabies?

Usually the signs of rabies develop within two weeks to three months after a bite. However, if the bite was on the head or face and is severe, symptoms may manifest themselves in as few as 10 days. Incubation periods of more than one year have been reported. Rabies is almost always fatal once symptoms occur.

There are two types of rabies—“furious” and “dumb.” Furious rabies can be recognized by certain specific signs. At first, the dog or cat infected with the virus will act strangely and differently from its normal habits. Following this stage, which lasts about two days, the pet may wander far afield. It is during this stage that the most damage is done for it is during this period of roving that it is “mad.”

The pet will bite anything in its path, thus infecting people or other animals with the fatal virus. It is also during this period that the pet appears to be frothing at the mouth. Actually, this is caused by drooling saliva due to difficulty in swallowing.

When the roving is over, the animal may return to its familiar haunts to find an isolated place to die.

“Dumb” rabies differs in that there is

no roving or “mad” period. Paralysis, usually of the lower jaw, is the first recognizable symptom. This soon spreads to the limbs causing weakness and a wobbly gait and then to vital organs, resulting very shortly in death.

In livestock, the signs of dumb rabies may be confused with signs indicating an obstruction in the throat, or choke or colic. Such misjudgment can lead to needless human exposure to rabies.

What if my pet is exposed?

Pets with an up-to-date vaccination that come into contact with a known or suspected rabid animal must receive a booster dose of vaccine within five days of exposure. Contact your local health department and veterinarian immediately.

A domestic animal NOT protected by a current rabies vaccination and exposed to a known or suspected rabid animal must be euthanized or placed in strict quarantine for six months under the direction of the local health department. If during quarantine, signs of the disease appear, the animal must be euthanized and tested for rabies. Avoid these risks! Have your pets vaccinated against rabies by your family veterinarian.

What if I vaccinate my own animals?

According to New York State law, rabies vaccine may only be sold to licensed veterinarians. Rabies vaccine may only be administered by licensed veterinarians or licensed veterinary technicians working under the direct supervision of the veterinarian.

In New York, animals that are vaccinated for rabies by non-veterinarians or non-veterinary technicians are considered to be unvaccinated by the state. Thus, if you vaccinate your dog or cat and it is exposed to rabies, the health department will consider it to be unvaccinated and the pet will have to be confined for six months or euthanized. Why take these risks?

Protect yourself and your pet. Have your family veterinarian vaccinate your pet with the proper series of vaccinations and ensure its continued good health and well-being.

How can Rabies be prevented?

Pet owners can help to prevent rabies in their communities by following these suggestions:

- 1. Have your dog and cat vaccinated.** Although both dogs and cats get rabies, cat rabies is more prevalent. Protect them both. Follow your veterinarian's advice.
- 2. Observe rabies control regulations.** New York State law requires that every dog, cat and domesticated ferret be vaccinated against rabies no later than four months after its birth. A second vaccination must be administered within one year of the first.
- 3. Obey leash and licensing laws.** Make sure your dog is identified by a license tag and a rabies inoculation tag.
- 4. Report stray animals to the police or local health department.** Handling stray dogs and cats can be dangerous.
- 5. Teach children not to play with or feed strange pets and to avoid handling or going near any wild animal, particularly when it appears to be tame.** This is especially important when camping.
- 6. Be suspicious of daytime activity in raccoons, skunks and bats, which**