



DELAWARE COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES

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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Raccoon tests positive for Rabies in the Town of Middletown

A raccoon in the Town of Middletown has tested positive for rabies. One person was bitten by the rabid raccoon and has begun Rabies Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP). Some animals may not show any signs of having rabies. It's important to leave wild animals alone, including baby animals, especially if it is acting strangely.

Rabies is endemic to the area. An exposure to rabies can be fatal for a human or a pet. Raccoons—along with foxes (red and gray), skunks, and bats—are considered a primary carrier of the rabies virus in the United States. While any warm-blooded animal can carry rabies, these are the ones we call “rabies vector species.”

Once infected, rabies is a virus that has a 100% fatality rate for mammals, including humans, when left untreated. Public Health recommends the following precautions to protect yourself and your family from possible exposure to rabies:

- Report any sick or strange acting wildlife
- Vaccinate pets and livestock. New York State law requires that all dogs, cats and ferrets be vaccinated against rabies by 4 months of age. Vaccinating your domestic animal not only provides protection for the animal, but vaccinated pets act as a barrier to keep the rabies virus from spreading between wild animals and people.
- Vaccination is also recommended for livestock with frequent human contact.
- Do not feed wildlife or stray animals and discourage them from seeking food near your home.
- Do not feed strays. According to Public Health Law an owner is defined as any person keeping, harboring, or having charge or control of or permitting any dog, cat or

domesticated ferret to remain on or be lodged or **fed** within such person's house yard or premises.

- **Do not approach an unknown animal, either wild or domestic, especially if it is acting in a strange or unusual manner.**
- Report all animal bites and any contact with bats to the Health Department in your county. Human rabies can be prevented after exposure by administering a series of shots.
- Keep garbage cans tightly covered and avoid storing any food outside.
- Children should be instructed to tell an adult immediately if they were bitten or scratched by any animal.
- If an unvaccinated pet comes in contact with rabid or suspected rabies the pet must be quarantined for six months.
- Vaccinated pets that come in contact with rabid or suspected rabies animal must be given a booster rabies vaccination within five days of the contact.

To report a suspected rabid animal call Delaware County Public Health Services at 607-832-5200. For more information call 607-832-5200 or visit our website at www.delawarecountypublichealth.com

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