

What To Do If You Are Exposed To Rabies

Exposure to the rabies virus is not fatal when treated in time. Modern treatment consists of a series of five shots in the arms over a period of weeks and a dose of anti-rabies globulin at the start of the treatment. It's relatively painless — seek treatment as soon as possible.

If you are exposed, immediately wash the wound or affected area for ten minutes with soap and water; if the eye, nose or mouth is affected, flush with water for several minutes. Then, contact your physician for an evaluation.

Don't wait for symptoms to develop — by then it is too late to treat the disease and death will result.

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For More Information



New Hampshire
Fish and Game
Department
(603) 271-2461
www.wildlife.state.nh.us



New Hampshire
Division of Public Health
Services
(603) 271-4496

New Hampshire
Department of Agriculture
(603) 271-2404



New Hampshire
Veterinary Medical
Association
(603) 224-2432



Concord SPCA
(603) 753-6751

WILDLIFE, RABIES AND

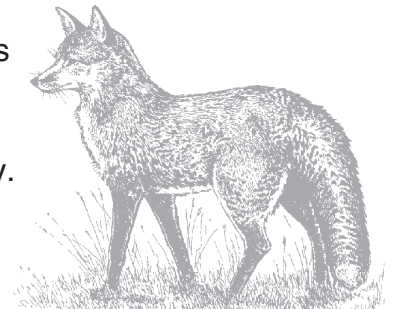


YOU!



A strain of raccoon
rabies has moved
through New
Hampshire
and become
established.

Knowing some basic facts
about rabies and wildlife will enable
you and your family to continue to
enjoy New
Hampshire's
outdoors
without
undue worry.

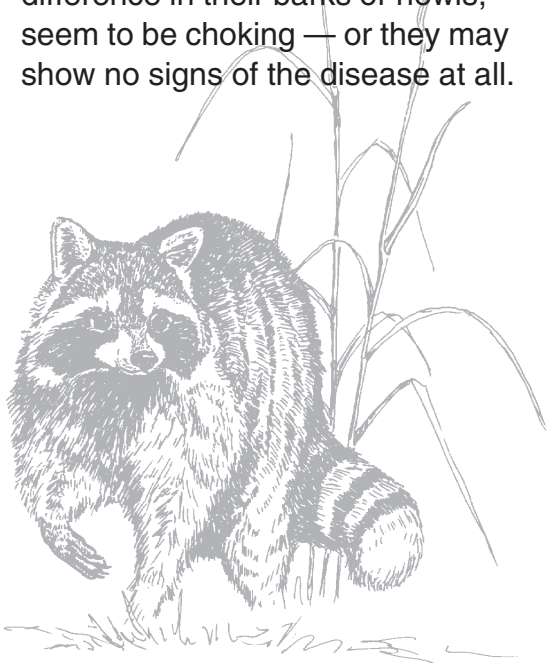


www.wildlife.state.nh.us

What is Rabies?

Rabies is an acute viral disease that attacks the central nervous system. It is a disease passed from animal to animal by bites. Humans can get rabies as well and, if untreated, it is almost always fatal.

Rabies is found most often in foxes, skunks, raccoons and other carnivores, as well as bats and occasionally woodchucks. Rabid animals are not always easy to identify. Contrary to what you may think, not all rabid animals foam and drool at the mouth. Animals may stagger, appear restless, be aggressive, appear very friendly, exhibit a difference in their barks or howls, seem to be choking — or they may show no signs of the disease at all.



How Humans Get Rabies

Rabies is generally transmitted from an infected wild or domestic animal by:

- a bite;
- a lick to open wounds or cuts; or
- nerve tissue or saliva introduced into cuts or the mucous membranes of the nose, eyes or mouth.

If you think you have been exposed, seek medical advice immediately! To save an infected person's life, treatment should begin immediately after the exposure and before the start of symptoms — known as the incubation period.

Protect Yourself and Your Pets!

Since the advent of mandatory pet immunization for rabies (effective since 1993 cats must be immunized, too), the disease has been found primarily in wildlife populations. However, now that you understand how the disease is transmitted, you can easily see how your unimmunized pets could expose you to the virus. Take these precautions:

- Obey all local leash laws.
- Check outside at night before you let your pet out. Keep your pets inside or take them in if a wild animal is in your yard. Go inside a building or car if you see a rabid animal close by.
- If your pet is involved in a fight, it could come home with disease-bearing saliva on its fur, so you need to be prepared. Keep a pair of latex or rubber gloves nearby and use them as you examine and confine your pet. Discuss further action with your vet.

PRECAUTIONS YOU CAN TAKE TO REDUCE THE POSSIBILITY OF EXPOSURE:

- **Vaccinate your pets** — vaccine is available for dogs, cats, ferrets, cattle, horses and sheep.
- **Stay away from stray animals.**
- **Avoid contact with all wildlife** — even innocent-appearing young raccoons can be rabies positive.
- **Discourage wild animals from dining around your home** — do not leave pet food outdoors and secure garbage can lids. Do not feed raccoons, foxes or skunks.
- **Teach your children to stay away from wild animals and pets other than their own.** Teach them to tell you about any animal that has bitten them.
- **Don't touch dead animals** — if it is absolutely necessary, wear rubber or latex gloves.
- **Let your doctor determine whether an exposure to rabies has occurred.** Do not try to make that determination yourself.
- **Know that there are safe and effective vaccines for persons exposed to rabies.**
- **Seek treatment immediately if exposed.**