

Rabies Prevention



WHAT IS RABIES?

Rabies is a deadly disease caused by a virus that attacks the nervous system. The virus is secreted in saliva and is usually transmitted to people and animals by a bite from an infected animal. Less commonly, rabies can be transmitted when saliva from a rabid animal comes in contact with an open cut on the skin or the eyes, nose, or mouth of a person or animal. Once the outward signs of the disease appear, rabies is nearly always fatal.

WHY SHOULD I BE CONCERNED?

Rabies is increasing in wildlife throughout Colorado, placing both humans and animals at risk for this deadly disease. Skunks and bats are the most significant sources of rabies in Colorado. Dogs, cats, skunks, bats, raccoons, foxes, and coyotes can carry rabies. In Colorado other wild animals, dogs, cats, horses and livestock can become infected if they are bitten by a rabid animal. Contact with infected wild or domestic animals places you and your family at risk for rabies infection.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF RABIES IN ANIMALS?

Once the rabies virus enters the body, it travels along the nerves to the brain. Dogs, cats, and ferrets with rabies may show a variety of signs, including fearfulness, aggression, excessive drooling, difficulty swallowing, staggering, and seizures. Rabid wild animals may only display unusual behavior; for example, an animal that is usually only seen at night may be seen wandering in the daytime.



don't procrastinate
VACCINATE

WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP CONTROL RABIES?

- ✓ Have your veterinarian vaccinate your dogs, cats and ferrets. Your veterinarian will advise you on the recommended frequency of vaccination in your area.
- ✓ Don't leave exposed garbage or pet food outside, as it may attract wild or stray animals.
- ✓ Wild animals should never be kept as pets. Not only may this be illegal, but wild animals pose a potential rabies threat to caretakers and to others.
- ✓ Observe all wild animals from a distance. A rabid wild animal may appear tame but don't go near it. Teach children **NEVER** to handle unfamiliar animals—even if they appear friendly.
- ✓ If you see a wild animal acting strangely, report it to the city or county animal control department.



IN ADDITION TO VACCINATING YOUR PETS, HORSES AND LIVESTOCK, FOLLOW THESE PRECAUTIONS TO PREVENT EXPOSURE TO RABIES:

- ✓ **Protect your home from wildlife.**
Close holes around the foundation of your house; cover window sills; screen chimneys and vents; and seal cracks and holes larger than 1/4 inch in diameter. Remove debris on your property that could provide nesting areas for wildlife.
- ✓ Maintain control of your pets. Keep your cat indoors or attach a bell to its collar to discourage it from hunting.
- ✓ Keep your dog under direct supervision. Do not allow your dog to run off-leash in parks or wilderness areas.
- ✓ Spay or neuter your pets. This will reduce the number of unwanted or stray animals in your community.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

<http://rabiesalliance.org/rabies>
www.colorado.gov/cdphe/rabies
www.worldrabiesday.org
www.AVMA.org



Source: Pet Animal Care
Facilities Act

