

Rabies tips for Pet Owners

**NO MAYBES
WHEN IT
COMES
TO RABIES.**

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For more information, visit
www.worldrabiesday.org

Basic facts

- There are around 7,000 cases of animal rabies, mostly in wildlife species, reported in the U.S. every year. These animals can expose humans or pets to rabies.
- Cats are more likely to be infected with rabies than dogs! Probably because they are less likely to be vaccinated and may not be well supervised when outdoors.

Rabies prevention starts with the animal owner

- All dogs, cats and ferrets should be vaccinated against rabies. Consider vaccinating valuable livestock and horses. Animals that have frequent contact with humans should be vaccinated.
- You can reduce the possibility of your pets being exposed to rabies by not letting them roam free.
- Spaying and neutering your pets may decrease undesirable behavior, like aggression and roaming.
- Teach children never to handle unfamiliar animals—even if they appear friendly.

Reduce the risk of exposure to rabies from wildlife

- Don't leave garbage or pet food outside, as it may attract wild or stray animals.
- Wild animals should not be kept as pets.
- Observe wild animals from a distance. Do not feed or handle them—even if they appear friendly.
- If you see a wild animal acting strangely, report it to city or county animal control personnel.

What to do when your pet bites someone

- Contact your local health department or local animal control.
- A dog, cat or ferret that bites a human will need to be examined by a veterinarian.
- The local public health official will require monitoring of the pet for 10 days, even if it is vaccinated.
- Report promptly any illness or unusual behavior of your pet to your veterinarian.

What to do when your pet gets bitten by another animal

- Consult your veterinarian immediately who will examine your pet and assess your pet's vaccination needs.
- Contact local animal control if your pet was bitten by a stray or wild animal.
- If you can identify or safely capture the animal that bit your pet, this will help determine if your pet was exposed to rabies.
- If your pet is currently vaccinated and possibly exposed to rabies, it will receive a booster vaccination and be subjected to close supervision for 45 days or more as specified by state law or local ordinance.
- If a rabies-suspect or confirmed rabid animal bites your pet and your pet is not currently vaccinated, the only options are euthanasia (to prevent the development of rabies) or a strict 6-month quarantine (to see if your pet will develop rabies from this potential exposure).

What to do if you are bitten by an animal

- Wash the wound thoroughly with soap and water.
- Contact your physician immediately.
- Report the bite to the local health department to evaluate the need for rabies post-exposure prophylaxis.
- If you can identify or safely capture the animal, you may not need to have shots. Dogs, cats and ferrets can be observed for 10 days to see if they pose a risk of rabies exposure to you. Other animals may be tested for rabies although this requires euthanasia and testing of brain material.
- Prompt and appropriate preventative treatment after being bitten and before the disease develops can stop rabies infection and prevent the disease.



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