

# Your Pets and Rabies

## *Why are we concerned about your pets and rabies?*

Rabies is a deadly disease caused by a virus that attacks the nervous system. Your pet can get rabies through the bite or saliva of an infected animal. Only mammals get rabies and it is most often seen in raccoons, skunks, foxes, and bats.

## *How can you protect your pet from getting rabies?*

Rabies can be prevented in cats, dogs, ferrets, and some livestock by keeping their rabies vaccination up-to-date. Even indoor pets should be vaccinated because wild animals (especially bats) can get in your house. You should also:

- Keep your pets on your property to prevent them from coming in contact with animals that may have rabies
- Put garbage and pet food indoors to prevent attracting wild or stray animals
- Use a leash for your pets to prevent them from coming in contact with infected animals

## *What should you do if you think your pet has been bitten by a rabid animal?*

If you need to handle your pet, wear gloves and protective clothing to prevent contact with wet saliva. Remember to:

- Call your veterinarian right away—even if your pet is current on their vaccination they should be given a booster rabies vaccine right away
- Contact animal control if the animal who bit your pet is still around
- Report the incident to your local health department and follow their instructions

**For more information:** [www.cdc.gov/rabies/pets](http://www.cdc.gov/rabies/pets)



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