

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Central Virginia Health District Confirms Rabies in Fox

BEDFORD COUNTY, Va. - The Bedford County Health Department has received confirmation that a fox submitted for testing on July 21, 2025, was positive for rabies. The fox was killed when it attacked a woman while she was on her porch in the Thaxton area of Bedford County near the intersection of Pendleton Road and Quarterwood Road. Anyone who may have been exposed to a fox or other animal, by a bite, scratch or contact with saliva, in that area should consult with their physician and contact the Bedford County Health Department at (540) 586-7952. You may also contact the health department by email at askCVHD@vdh.virginia.gov.

This incident is a reminder that rabies is present in Virginia and sometimes infects domestic animals like dogs and cats. Rabies is caused by a virus that attacks the nervous system and is lethal if proper medical care is not given following an exposure to the virus. The most common source of exposure to rabies is a bite by a rabid animal. Rabies may also be transmitted by saliva from a rabid animal coming into contact with open wounds, the mouth, eyes or nose.

Actions you should take to prevent rabies in people and pets include:

- Be sure that your pets are up to date on their rabies vaccinations.
- Avoid contact with wild animals or stray animals.
- Do not feed stray animals. Avoid wild animals, especially raccoons, bats, foxes and skunks. Feed your pets indoors and do not let them wander.
- Teach children to avoid contact with wild animals and pets they are not familiar with.
- Do not handle sick, injured or dead animals. Contact a licensed wildlife rehabber if you have concerns about sick or injured wildlife.
- Keep wild animals out of homes by capping chimneys with screens and blocking openings in attics, cellars and porches. Ensure trash cans have tight fitting lids.
- Do not try to trap or handle stray and wild animals. If a bat is found indoors and may have had contact with someone, do not release it. Call your local animal control officer or health department to determine if the animal should be picked up and tested for rabies.
- Report all bites to people to the local health department for investigation.

If you are bitten by a wild or stray animal do not panic. Wash the wound(s) thoroughly with warm soapy water and contact animal control, your doctor or the health department for further recommendations.

You may also visit the Virginia Department of Health's website at <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/epidemiology/epidemiology-fact-sheets/rabies/> or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's website at <https://www.cdc.gov/rabies/> .

For more information about rabies, visit: <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/animal-contact-humanhealth/rabies-control/>