

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 22, 2025

Media Contact: Kim Foster, kimberlee.foster@vdh.virginia.gov

Central Virginia Health District Shares Rabies Safety Tips *World Rabies Day is September 28*

Lynchburg, Va. – [World Rabies Day](#) is September 28. Central Virginia Health District reminds you to avoid contact with strays and wild animals. Even though rabies is nearly 100% fatal, it is highly preventable.

[Rabies](#) is commonly found in Virginia in wild animals, such as raccoons, skunks, and foxes. Since January 1 of this year, 23 animals have tested positive for rabies in the Central Virginia Health District

Vaccinating domestic animals, especially cats and dogs, is an important and effective barrier to prevent the transmission of rabies from wild animals to humans. Cats and dogs are more likely than people to have contact with wild animals and, if infected with rabies, could pass the disease along to humans. Virginia law requires all dogs and cats four months of age and older be vaccinated for rabies by a licensed veterinarian. Vaccinations must be kept current.

To protect yourself and your animals from rabies:

- Do not feed stray animals. Report them to local animal control authorities.
- Avoid wild animals, especially raccoons, bats, foxes and skunks. Wild animals are not pets.
- Do not handle sick, injured or dead animals. Instead, report these animals to the [Department of Wildlife Resources](#). [Permitted wildlife rehabilitators](#) are another option.
- Teach children to avoid contact with wild animals and unfamiliar pets.
- Feed your pets indoors and do not let them wander.
- Keep wild animals out of your home by capping chimneys with screens. Block openings in attics, cellars and porches. Ensure trash cans have tight fitting lids.
- Make sure your pets are vaccinated against rabies and their shots are up to date. By law, all dogs and cats must be vaccinated against rabies.
- Talk with your healthcare provider before traveling overseas to see if rabies vaccinations are recommended.

Anyone potentially exposed to a rabid animal should notify their healthcare provider immediately. Exposure includes any bites, scratches or contact with saliva.

If you are bitten by a wild or stray animal, do not panic. Wash animal bite wounds thoroughly with soap and water to decrease the chance of infection. Contact your healthcare provider or local health department for further recommendations.

If your pet is attacked or bitten by an animal, contact your local animal control or health department office.

For more information about rabies, visit the [Virginia Department of Health Rabies Control](#) webpage.

#