



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 1, 2009

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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CONFIRMED CASE OF RABIES IN CUMBERLAND COUNTY

This morning the State Public Health Lab in Raleigh confirmed a case of rabies in Hope Mills. A raccoon was picked up by Animal Services on Old Oak Lane, Hope Mills, and was sent to the State Lab for testing. Residents in the vicinity should remain alert for sick or abnormal acting wildlife. Officials will be in the vicinity to alert residents of the incident.

All pet owners are urged to check the vaccination status of their pets. If pets are not vaccinated or are due for a booster shot, they should be taken to any local veterinarian for rabies vaccination immediately.

The first sign of rabies in animals is a change in behavior. Animals may become aggressive, attacking for no reason, or they may become very quiet. Wild animals can lose their fear of people and act tame. Rabid animals may walk in a circle, drag a leg, or fall over. Some cannot swallow so they are not able to eat or drink and often drool. Animals usually die within a week after first becoming ill.

Avoiding wild animals and keeping your distance from stray dogs and cats is the first step in preventing an animal bite. Any pet, which appears to have been in a fight while outside, should be handled very cautiously and seen by a veterinarian.

If you are bitten or scratched by an animal:

- Immediately wash the wound with lots of soap and water. Seek medical attention/advice.
- Call Animal Services at 321-6852, Monday-Friday 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Call Sheriff's office at 323-1500 after 5 p.m., weekends and holidays.
- Go to the emergency room.

It is also important to vaccinate your pets for rabies and keep their shots current. Pet owners are reminded that all dogs and cats must be vaccinated against rabies, as required by N.C. state law. Pet owners are subject to a fine of \$100 for each unvaccinated dog or cat. Pets must be vaccinated when they reach the age of four months.

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