



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Animal Control

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CONFIRMED CASE OF RABIES IN CUMBERLAND COUNTY

FAYETTEVILLE - This afternoon the State Public Health Lab in Raleigh confirmed a case of rabies in Cumberland County. A dead bat was picked up by Animal Control on Friday at Melvin Place Apartments off Rosehill Road in Fayetteville and sent for testing. Residents in the vicinity of Melvin Place Apartments should remain alert for sick or abnormal acting wildlife. Officials will be in the area to alert residents of the incident.

Many children live in the Melvin Place complex. Health Director Buck Wilson advises parents that if their child may have had contact with the bat at the complex during the last couple of days to contact him at 910-703-1207 immediately. It is critical that anyone who may have had contact with the bat to seek treatment.

This is the fifth case of rabies in the county since January 1.

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 a 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 under running water for at least 10 minutes with lots of soap. Seek medical attention/advice.
- Call Animal Control at 321-6852 Monday-Friday 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Call the 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 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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