

AUGUST IS RABIES AWARENESS MONTH

Did You Know...

- The Scott County Health Department contracts with the Scott County Humane Society to investigate all animal bites in Scott County and to answer questions about animal control issues in rural Scott County such as barking, harassment by animals, animals at large, etc.
- The Scott County Health Department works with patients and physicians to determine the risk of rabies and the need for the rabies shots after a bite has occurred.



What is Rabies?

Rabies is a disease that affects the brain. It is caused by a virus which is the result of an exposure to an animal with rabies. Rabies is always fatal in humans. This is why it is extremely important to contact your physician and the Scott County Humane Society if you have been exposed.

The last human case reported in Iowa occurred in 2002. In 2005, there were 108 reported animal cases of rabies in Iowa.

How Can Someone Be Exposed to Rabies?

There are two types of exposure:

1. Bite—any penetration of the skin by teeth.
2. Non-bite exposure—saliva or brain tissue from an animal with rabies gets into any of the following: wound, open skin, eyes, nose, or mouth.



Another way someone may get rabies is through a possible exposure. This is when you are not sure if you or your children have been bitten. For example, bats have small teeth and it may leave marks that are not easily seen. So, if you wake up and find a bat in your room, be sure to seek medical attention and get the bat tested for rabies.

Which Animals Usually Get Rabies?

Animals that are wild and meat-eating are the most likely to be infected with rabies. This could include skunks, raccoons, foxes, coyotes, and bobcats. Also, bats are more likely to be rabid. However, pets or farm animals such as dogs, cats, cattle, or horses can pass rabies on to people as well. Rabbits and rodents rarely get rabies.



What are the Symptoms of Rabies in an Animal?

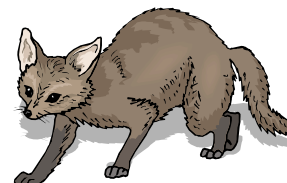
Animals with rabies can either be easily over-excited or angered or can be calm and have difficulty moving. An animal with rabies may eat unusual things and have difficulty swallowing which can result in drooling. Some animals with rabies display no symptoms at all.

What Should You Do if You are Bitten or Scratched By an Animal?

Following any bite or scratch by an animal, it is important to immediately wash the area with soap and water. The Scott County Health Department recommends that you report the animal bite to the Scott County Humane Society Animal Control and then immediately contact your physician to discuss your risk of rabies exposure.

What Will Your Doctor Do?

Your doctor will work with you to determine your level of exposure and whether or not treatment will be needed. Your doctor will use tools and resources available through the Scott County Health Department and the Iowa Department of Public Health to help make this decision. It is important to contact your physician soon after you are exposed.



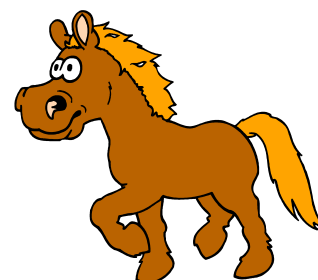
How Can You Protect Your Pet(s) from Rabies?

Vaccination is the key for prevention of rabies in pets. Dogs are required by law to be vaccinated. Cat and livestock vaccinations are encouraged, but are not required by law. Be sure that your pet's rabies vaccination is up-to-date and always have your pet wear the rabies tag so that others will know that your pet has been vaccinated. Keep your pet away from wild or stray animals.

How Can You Protect Yourself from Rabies?

Follow these tips to protect yourself from rabies:

- Vaccinate your pets.
- Stay away from wild or stray animals.
- Do not touch or handle dead animals.
- Keep garbage cans covered or in a protected place so that wild animals will not be attracted.
- Never handle bats.
- Be alert for animals that are acting sick or strangely.
- Teach your children to avoid unfamiliar animals and to report to you if they have been bitten or scratched by any animal.



Resources:

The following resources were used in this newsletter and additional information about rabies can be found on the Scott County Health Department's website at www.scottcountyiowa.com/health, Iowa Department of Public Health's website at www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/common/pdf/epifacts/rabies.pdf, and Center For Disease Control and

Prevention's website at www.cdc.gov/hcidod/dvrd/rabies/.

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