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# Protect Yourself From RABIES

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## **What is Rabies?**

Rabies is a disease that is spread through the saliva of animals. Rabies affects the brain of the animal which causes them to become sick and die. An animal sick with rabies spread the disease by biting or scratching another animal or person.

## **What Animals Get Rabies?**

The most common animal to have the rabies virus in Elgin County is the bat. Other animals are skunks, foxes, coyotes, raccoons as well as dogs, cats, and livestock.

## **How Can I Tell If An Animal Is Rabid?**

Damage to the brain causes the visible symptoms of rabies.

- Some animals may go into isolated places.
- Wild animals may lose their fear of humans.
- Animals that come out at night are seen during the day.
- There may be signs of paralysis such as abnormal facial expressions, drooping head or sagging jaw, or weakness in the hind limbs.
- Diseased animals may be in a state of extreme excitement and aggression.
- They may gnaw and bite their own limbs.
- They may attack objects or other animals.
- Periods of aggression can alternate with periods of depression.

Damage to the brain causes the visible symptoms of rabies. Rabies can manifest itself in two different ways: dumb rabies and furious rabies.

## **Dumb Rabies:**

- Some animals may become depressed and retreat to isolated places.
- Wild animals, especially skunks, may lose their fear of humans.
- Animals may show signs of paralysis such as abnormal facial expressions, drooping heads, sagging jaws or paralyzed hind limbs.

## **Furious Rabies:**

- Animals may show extreme excitement and aggression.
- Animals may gnaw and bite their own limbs.
- Animals may attack stationary things or other animals.
- Bouts of furious rabies usually alternate with periods of depression.

## **How Long Does It Take For An Animal To Show Signs Of Rabies, After It Is Infected?**

The time between exposure to the virus and the onset of symptoms can range from about two weeks, to many months.

## **Can Animals Have Rabies Without Showing Any Symptoms?**

Yes. The rabies virus can be found in animal saliva, days before any obvious symptoms develop. However, all animals that have the virus will develop symptoms and eventually die of the disease.

## **What Do I Do If I Think Someone Has Been In Contact With A Rabid Animal?**

- Wash the affected skin area thoroughly with soap and water and immediately contact your doctor or local health department. Help is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. After normal business hours an answering service will locate on-call staff for you.
- If you think your clothing has been in contact with fresh saliva from a rabid animal, wash it immediately in soap and hot water.

***DO NOT GET ANY SALIVA FROM THE ANIMAL ON YOUR SKIN!***

## **What Do You Do With A Sick Or Dead Animal?**

- Do not approach or touch the animal.
- Report it immediately to your municipal animal control agency or the police.
- Do not report animals found killed on the road (road kill) - unless you know there has been contact with humans or other animals. Road kills are not included in the rabies-monitoring program.

## **How Do I Protect My Family Against Rabies?**

- Have your pets vaccinated. The rabies vaccine that your veterinarian has given your pet in the past will protect your pet from all strains of rabies.
- Warn your children to stay away from wild or stray animals. Wild animals belong in the wild. It is against the law to keep wildlife, including raccoons, as pets.

- Discourage wild animals from taking up residence in your home or on your property. Cover up potential entrances, such as uncapped chimneys, loose shingles and openings in attics, roofs and eaves. If you are not sure where animals are getting in, sprinkle flour around potential entrances and check for footprints later. You can also stuff a rag or a ball of paper in a suspect hole and check later to see if it has been removed.
- Sprinkle mothballs or hang ammonia-soaked cotton rags near the entrance and keep the area brightly lit. Raccoons dislike loud noises, bright lights and strong smells. Use the same methods in your garden or the area where you keep your garbage or composter.
- If your pet has been bitten or scratched by a wild animal, do not handle your pet without gloves.
- Bring your pet's food in at the end of the day.

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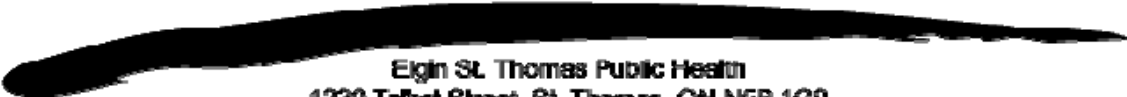
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**For more information contact:**

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