



Raccoon Rabies

What is Raccoon Rabies?

Raccoon rabies is a strain of rabies spread mainly by raccoons, although other animals can have the same type of rabies.

What happens if a case of raccoon rabies is confirmed in Ontario?

Staff of the Ministry of Natural Resources will begin a point-control program near the point of discovery in an effort to contain the disease or slow its spread.

How does a point-control program work?

In urban areas, the program involves humanely euthanizing all raccoons within a 2 km radius of the confirmed case, and vaccinating the raccoons within a further 2 km area. This will create a buffer zone of inoculated animals.

The difference in areas is based on how far the raccoons are likely to travel within a given period. Urban raccoons inhabit a much smaller territory than raccoons in the wild.

Why is it necessary to euthanize some of the animals?

Rabies takes time to incubate. Infected animals may not show symptoms of the disease for weeks. By the time a case of rabies is confirmed, the disease may have taken hold in the area. Vaccinations may no longer be an effective control.

How does the vaccination program work?

With the help of expert local trappers, ministry staff will set out live-trap cages to catch raccoons without harming them. Cages are checked within 24 hours and the trapped raccoons vaccinated. They are marked with ear-tags to identify them as vaccinated, then released.

What role will the public play in this process?

The public can use the preventive measures that are successful against any strain of rabies. Vaccinate pets, warn children to stay away from wild or stray animals, and report any animal that behaves strangely to your local humane society or police.

Raccoons have been known to hitch a ride on trucks and other vehicles. There is a risk that rabies could be spread far into the province this way. Make sure that your vehicle does not pick up or carry raccoons.

How can I prevent bringing raccoon rabies into Canada?

- Check your vehicle for stowaway raccoons. If possible, do this before you reach the border.
- Vaccinate your pets annually for rabies and carry a veterinary certificate of vaccination. Today's vaccines protect against raccoon rabies.
- If you find a live raccoon on or in your vehicle, call a local animal control agency.

DO NOT TOUCH THE ANIMAL YOURSELF

- If you find a dead raccoon on or in your vehicle, and must remove it yourself, use the following method:
- Take two new, clean garbage bags and place one inside the other. Turn the bags inside out over your hands and arms to protect yourself from touching saliva.
- Maneuver the bags around the dead raccoon until the animal is in the bag.

DO NOT GET ANY SALIVA FROM THE RACCOON ON YOUR SKIN

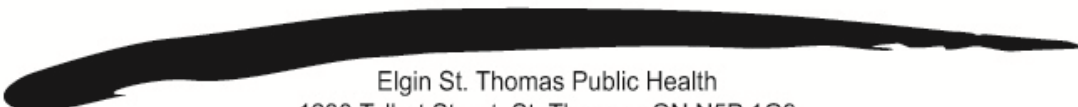
- Before you handle the outside of the bag, check that it is clean, and then tie the bag closed.
- Call the nearest Canadian Food Inspection Agency office. This is listed in the blue pages of the phone book under Government of Canada. They will either pick up the animal or give you instructions.

(Created in conjunction with the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency)

For more information call your doctor or contact:

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