

Nancy McGraw, LCSW, MBA
Public Health Director

Lise Kennedy, RN, MS
Director of Patient Services



Phone: (845) 292-5910
Fax: (845) 513-2276

Sullivan County Public Health Services
PO Box 590, 50 Community Lane
Liberty, NY 12754

For Immediate Release
August 12, 2016
Liberty, NY
Contact: Nancy McGraw, 845-292-5910

Skunk Tests Positive for Rabies – 3rd positive rabies case this year

Sullivan County Public Health Services is informing the public that a skunk has tested positive for the rabies virus in the Town of Rockland. The skunk attacked a family's dog. This is the third confirmed case of animal rabies in Sullivan County so far this year. The previous two involved a raccoon and a feral cat.

The rabies virus is considered endemic and occurs commonly in wild animals throughout New York State, with the vast majority of rabies cases reported each year in bats, foxes, skunks and woodchucks. Domestic animals account for less than 10% of the reported rabies cases, which most often include cats, cattle, and dogs.

What Can People Do To Protect Themselves Against Rabies?

Be sure your dogs, cats and ferrets are up-to-date on their rabies vaccinations. Vaccinated pets serve as a buffer between rabid wildlife and humans. Protect them, and you protect yourself and family. Vaccines for dogs, cats and ferrets over three months of age are effective for a one-year period. Revaccinations are effective for up to three years. Pets too young to be vaccinated should be kept indoors.

Don't try to separate two fighting animals. Wear gloves if you handle your pet after a fight. Keep family pets indoors at night. Don't leave them outside unattended or let them roam free.

Don't attract wild animals to your home or yard. Keep your property free of stored bird seed, food garbage or other foods that may attract animals. Feed pets indoors. Tightly cap or put away garbage cans. Board up any openings to your attic, basement, porch or garage. Cap your chimney with screens. ***Don't feed, touch or adopt wild animals, stray dogs or stray cats.***

Encourage children to immediately tell an adult if they are bitten by any animal. Tell children not to touch any animal except their own.

If a wild animal is on your property, let it wander away. Bring children and pets indoors and alert neighbors who are outside. You may contact a nuisance wildlife control officer who will remove the animal for a fee. If you are being threatened by a wild animal, go indoors and call the local police.

If you can safely do so, don't let an animal escape that has possibly exposed someone to rabies. Depending on the species, it can be observed or tested for rabies in order to avoid the need for rabies treatment for people, or to avoid euthanization or prolonged quarantined observation periods for exposed pets.

This includes bats who have had skin contact or have been found in a room with a sleeping person, unattended child, or someone with mental impairment. Bats have small, sharp teeth and in certain circumstances people can be bitten and not know it.

Bats can be particularly difficult to keep out of buildings because they can get through cracks as small as a pencil. Methods to keep bats out (bat-proofing) of homes and summer camps should be done during the fall and winter. If bats are already inside (e.g., in an attic or other areas), consult with your local health department about humane ways to remove them.

The next free rabies vaccination clinic sponsored by Sullivan County Public Health Services for dogs, cats and ferrets will be held in Hanoffee Park, Town of Liberty on Tuesday, August 23, 2016 from 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm.

Seek treatment for all animal bites and report contact with wild animals to Sullivan County Public Health Services at (845) 292-5910. Someone is on-call and available after business hours.

See flyer below

###



RABIES

PREVENTION

BECAUSE OF THE INCREASED RISK OF BEING EXPOSED TO AN ANIMAL INFECTED WITH THE RABIES VIRUS DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS, SULLIVAN COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES RECOMMENDS THE FOLLOWING:

DO NOT approach, handle or feed wild or domestic animals you are unfamiliar with,

DO NOT discard a bat found in your sleeping quarters upon waking, or one you may have come into contact with, try to trap or capture it if you can do it safely, so that it can be tested.

DO NOT allow your pets to run free.

DO keep your pet vaccinations up to date, and **DO** call Public Health Services if you are bitten or scratched by a domestic or a wild animal.

Capturing an animal or bat so that it can be tested for rabies is preferable to being treated with the expensive rabies vaccination series following an exposure.



For assistance or information call:
SULLIVAN COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES
292-5910 extension 0. (available 24/7)