

Vaccinate Your Dogs and Cats

- You can protect yourself and others by vaccinating your dogs and cats. If allowed outdoors unsupervised, your dog or cat is more likely to come in contact with a rabid wild animal. Unvaccinated pets that are bitten by a wild animal will need to be confined for 6 months or euthanized.
- In Connecticut, all dogs and cats over the age of 3 months are required by law to be vaccinated against rabies. Owners are required to show a vaccination certificate as proof of current rabies vaccination in order to license their dogs.
- The law allows municipalities to sponsor annual, low cost rabies vaccination clinics for dogs and cats. Cats are not required to be licensed, but are required to be vaccinated against rabies.



What You Can do to Help Control Rabies

- Be a responsible pet owner, protect your pets; keep vaccinations up to date. Pets should not be allowed to roam. Report any domestic animals that are acting strangely to the local animal control officer.
- Do not leave food of any kind outside your home, and secure garbage can lids to avoid attracting wild animals.
- It is against the law to own wild animals as pets. If you see a wild animal acting strangely, report it to the local police or to the Department of Energy & Environmental Protection. Do not go near it.
- Bats and other wild animals should be kept out of dwellings by closing any small opening they can use to enter. Information about nuisance wildlife is available on the DEEP [website](#).
- If your pet is bitten or has had physical contact with a potentially rabid wild animal, wear gloves to examine or wash your pet. Contact your veterinarian and local animal control officer for further advice.

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LET WILD ANIMALS STAY WILD



RABIES

in Connecticut

What You Should Know and What You Should Do

PROTECT YOUR PETS—VACCINATE



Rabies



- Rabies is a deadly viral disease that infects the brains of mammals, including people. The virus is found in the saliva of infected animals and is transmitted primarily through a bite. The virus can also be transmitted if saliva or brain tissue enters open wounds, eyes, nose or mouth.
- Only mammals can be infected with and spread rabies; birds, fish, reptiles, and amphibians can not. Although raccoons, skunks, and bats are the most frequent wild animals that test positive for rabies, other wildlife can also spread the disease. Cats are the most frequent domestic animals that test positive for rabies.
- Rabies is widespread in the United States and in most parts of the world. Rabies vaccination programs and increased public education have decreased the number of cases among humans. Visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [website](#) for additional rabies information.

If You Are Bitten

- Don't panic; wash the wound thoroughly with soap and running water to reduce the chance of infection. Give first aid as you would for any wound.
- Call your doctor immediately. Explain how you received the bite and follow the doctor's instructions.
- If you are bitten by a domestic animal, report the incident to the animal control officer (ACO). If the animal is a dog, cat or ferret, the ACO will quarantine the animal to observe for signs of rabies.
- If you are bitten by a wild animal, try to safely capture or restrain it without further risk of exposure. Use a box and heavy leather gloves or shovel. For advice, call the Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP). When prompt assistance is needed, call your local police department or animal control. The animal will need to be euthanized before it is submitted for testing. For accurate test results, care must be taken not to damage the animal's head.
- A bat bite may go unnoticed. When a bat is found in the same room as a person who is sleeping, an unattended child, or intoxicated or mentally disabled person, it should be safely captured if possible. [Bat capture](#) will require a small box or can, and a piece of cardboard. Contact your [local health department](#) to make arrangements to test the bat or for additional advice if it cannot be captured.

Your Family Doctor

- It is critically important that you notify your doctor immediately after an animal bite. Your doctor will determine if anti-rabies treatment is necessary. Your doctor will also treat you for other possible infections that can be caused by the bite. Staff of the Epidemiology and Emerging Infections Program, Department of Public Health, are available to provide physician consultation.

If Your Pet Has Bitten Someone

- Tell the person bitten to see their doctor immediately and report the bite to the animal control officer.
- State law requires that your pet is confined for 14 days, and watched closely for signs of rabies.
- Check with your veterinarian about your pet's rabies vaccination status.

