

What is a rabies

observation? Any dog or cat that has bitten a human must be examined by a licensed veterinarian within 24 hours of the bite occurrence. The rabies vaccine given to dogs and cats is only 98% effective, so even animals current with their shots must be observed. The veterinarian will check for signs of rabies and implant the animal with an identification microchip. This information will be forwarded to DuPage County Animal Control by the vet. The animal will be reexamined again on the 10th day after the first exam.

Animals not current with their shots will have to be examined 5 days after the first checkup and again on the 10th day after the first exam.

The animal may be kept at home during the 10 day observation period. The owner must keep it on a leash when it is taken outside and it must be kept in a manner to prevent it from biting again. The animal will be impounded by the vet or DCAC if, in the opinion of the police officer, veterinarian or animal control warden, the owner is not likely to abide by the home confinement restrictions.

What about animal to animal bites? If your pet has been in a fight with another animal, wear gloves to handle your pet. Call your veterinarian, and isolate the pet from other animals and people until examined. A vaccinated pet may need a booster dose of rabies vaccine as soon as possible. Unvaccinated animals exposed to a known rabid animal must be confined and professionally observed for six months or euthanized.

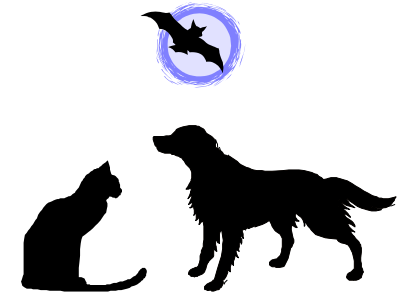
What can people do to protect themselves and their pets?

- Do not feed or touch wild or stray animals
- Keep your pets current with the rabies vaccinations
- Do not allow pets to roam
- Teach children not to approach ANY animal, domestic or wild
- Report all animal bites to the authorities



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Rabies



What is Rabies?
What Animals Can Get the Virus?

How are Humans Exposed?

What are the Signs of Exposure?

RABIES

What is rabies? Rabies is a deadly disease caused by a virus that is present in the saliva of rabid animals. The virus causes an inflammation of the brain and attacks the central nervous system. There is no known treatment for rabies once the symptoms appear. Fortunately, only a few human cases are reported in the United States (on average one per year), most of which are acquired in foreign countries.

Who can get rabies? All mammals, including man, are susceptible. From 1990 to 1994 in the U.S., an average of 7,000 animals per year (most of them wild) were diagnosed as having the disease. Rabies is found throughout most of the world and in all states except Hawaii. Rabies is common in bats, skunks, raccoons and foxes, but the disease also has been found in deer and in large rodents, such as woodchucks. Cats, dogs and livestock can get rabies, too, if they are not vaccinated. Some animals, including chipmunks, gerbils, guinea pigs, hamsters, mice, rabbits, rats and squirrels, **RARELY** get rabies. Birds, fish, insects, lizards, snakes and turtles **NEVER** get rabies.

How is rabies spread?

Exposure may occur through a bite from an infected animal, if a person is scratched by an infected animal, if the animal's saliva enters an open cut or mucous membrane (nose, mouth, eyes).

What are the symptoms of rabies?

Early symptoms in humans include irritability, headache, fever and sometimes itching or pain at the site of exposure. The disease eventually progresses to paralysis, spasms of the throat muscles, convulsions, delirium and death. Symptoms in animals are usually changes in the animal's behavior, difficulty walking and a general appearance of sickness. A rabid animal usually dies within one week after showing signs of the disease.

The incubation period is variable. It can be as short as nine days, however, the usual incubation period is 20 to 90 days. It is shorter when the bite is on the head (25-48 days) than when on an extremity (46-78 days).

What should be done if a bite occurs?

Wash the wound thoroughly with soap and water and seek medical attention

immediately. Try to confine the animal (if this can be done without further exposure). Notify your local Rabies Control agency as soon as possible.

A rabies observation must be completed to insure that the animal does not have rabies.

What is the bite report procedure?

All police departments, Sheriff's Police and medical authorities will accept bite reports from bite victims and their families. They will be faxed or mailed to DuPage County Animal Control within twenty-four (24) hours.

What is the purpose of a rabies observation?

If a dog or cat bites a human, the animal must be observed by a veterinarian during a ten day period to see if symptoms of rabies develop. The longest period of time that a dog or cat can have the virus present in its saliva before symptoms appear is 2-3 days. Therefore, if the animal remains healthy until at least 10 days after it bites, it could not have been infected at the time of the bite.