

What is rabies?

Rabies is a contagious and fatal disease caused by a virus that people can get from infected



wildlife such as skunks, foxes, and bats. People can also

get rabies from dogs, cats and from livestock.

Biting is the most common method of infection from one animal to another or from an animal to a human. The virus can also enter the body from saliva contact with a mucus membrane or an open wound.

Is there rabies in Humboldt County?

Absolutely! Every year the Public Health Laboratory tests approximately 100 animals from all areas of the County. A few animals test positive each year. Since 1955, 343 animals have tested positive: 159 skunks, 75 foxes, 34 cows, 48 bats, 13 cats, 6 dogs, 5 horses, 1 coyote, 1 opossum, and 1 bobcat.

What are the symptoms of rabies in animals?

The classic symptom of rabies is abnormal behavior - nocturnal animals seen in daylight; normally shy animals that act aggressive or aggressive animals that act friendly.

Symptoms in a domestic animal may also include: irritability or restlessness, exaggerated response to bright light or loud noise; snapping at insects or imaginary objects; depraved appetite (eats rocks, sticks, feces, etc.); bites objects to the point of self-injury; loss of sensation of physical pain; difficulty in swallowing and paralysis.



Note: It is possible for an animal to be infectious with rabies and show no outward symptoms.

What do I do if my pet has contact with a possible rabid animal?

If your pet has had contact with a wild animal, and the wild animal is dead, and available for testing, the Humboldt County Public Health Branch Laboratory will test the brain for rabies.

If the wild animal tests positive for rabies a 30-day quarantine is required if your pet is vaccinated.

A six month, double-enclosure, "no touch" quarantine is required if your pet does not have a current rabies vaccination.



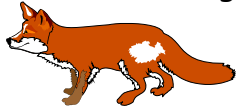
What happens if a cat or a dog bites a person?

By law, a biting cat or dog must be quarantined for 10 days regardless of the rabies vaccination status.

Contact your local Animal Control Agency to report dog or cat bites.

What do I do if I have contact with a suspected rabid wild animal?

First, you should contact your physician. If the animal is dead and available for testing, the Public Health Laboratory will test it for rabies.



Testing is arranged by contacting the Division of Environmental Health at (707) 445-6215 or toll free at 1-800-963-9241.

If the animal is unavailable for testing, the decision for post-exposure treatment is between the person and their physician.



Public Health Branch Nursing is available to answer questions about the risk of rabies and treatment options. **Call 268-2105.**

What can Humboldt County residents do to protect themselves, family, neighbors and pets from rabies?

1. Have your pet dogs and cats vaccinated for rabies: Cats are now the most frequently reported domestic rabid animal in the United States.
2. Do not feed wildlife around your home either intentionally or inadvertently (pet food left out at night). If you feed raccoons (and skunks at the same time), sooner or later a bite is going to occur to pets (yours or someone else's) or to people.
3. Stay away from wild animals, stray dogs and stray cats.
4. If a domestic or wild animal bites you, seek medical treatment.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT. The County does not discriminate on the basis of disability in services, programs, activities, or employment. Persons with disabilities requiring special assistance or accommodation may contact the Director of Environmental Health at (707) 445-6215."

RABIES IN HUMBOLDT COUNTY

**Humboldt County
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Health and Human
Services**

Public Health Branch

**Division of
Environmental Health**

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