

Rabies

What is Rabies:

Rabies is a preventable viral disease most often transmitted through the bite of a rabid animal. The vast majority of rabies cases reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) each year occur in wild animals like raccoons, skunks, bats, and foxes.

Transmission of Rabies:

The rabies virus is transmitted through saliva or brain/nervous system tissue. You can only get rabies by coming in contact with these specific bodily fluids and tissues.

It's important to remember that rabies is a medical necessity but not an emergency. Decisions should not be delayed. Wash any wounds immediately. See your doctor for attention for any trauma due to an animal attack.

Sign and Symptoms of Rabies:

The first symptoms of rabies may be very similar to those of the flu including general weakness or discomfort, fever, or headache. These symptoms may last for days.

There also may be discomfort or a prickling or itching sensation at the site of bite, progressing within days. As the disease progresses, more specific symptoms appear and may include sleeplessness, nervousness, confusion, slight or partial paralysis, excitation, hallucinations, agitation, hypersalivation (increase in saliva), difficulty swallowing, and hydrophobia (fear of water). Death usually occurs within days of the onset of these symptoms.

Risk for Your Pet:

Any animal bitten or scratched by either a wild animal or a bat that is not available for testing should be regarded as having been exposed to rabies. If this happens contact your veterinary immediately.

Prevention of Rabies in Animals:

1. Visit your veterinarian with your pet on a regular basis and keep rabies vaccinations up-to-date for all cats, ferrets, and dogs.
2. Maintain control of your pets by keeping cats and ferrets indoors and keeping dogs under direct supervision.
3. Spay or neuter your pets to help reduce the number of unwanted pets that may not be properly cared for or vaccinated regularly.
4. Call animal control to remove all stray animals from your neighborhood since these animals may be unvaccinated or ill.

