



MIDDLESEX COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Ronald G. Rios
Chairman

David A. Papi
Director

(732) 745-3100
Fax (732) 745-2568

RABIES FACT SHEET

What is rabies?

Rabies is caused by a virus which can infect all warm-blooded mammals, including man. The rabies virus is found in the saliva of a rabid animal and is transmitted by a bite or possibly by contamination of an open cut.

What animals get rabies?

New Jersey is enzootic for raccoon and bat variants of rabies. Bats, raccoons, skunks, groundhogs, foxes, cats, and dogs represent about 95% of animals diagnosed with rabies in the United States.

What do I do if I am bitten by a potentially rabid animal?

- Wash animal bite wounds thoroughly with soap and water as soon as possible after the bite. Contamination of open cuts or scratches with saliva of potentially rabid animals should also be washed off immediately.
- Consult a physician as soon as possible.
- Immediately report a bite from a wild or domestic animal to your local health department.

How can I tell if an animal has rabies?

Immediately report any wild animal showing signs of unusual behavior.

- Signs of unusual animal behavior could be that the animal may:
 - move slowly
 - act as if it is tame
 - appear sick
 - have problems swallowing
 - have an increase of saliva
 - have increased drooling
 - act aggressive
 - have difficulty moving
 - have paralysis
 - bite at everything if excited

Residents should avoid any contact with the animal and call your local animal control officer or local police department.

How can I protect my pet from getting rabies?

- Be sure that all family pets are up to date on their rabies vaccination. If unsure please call your veterinarian. Call your local health department for free rabies vaccination clinic availability.
- Try to prevent your pets from coming into contact with wild animals.

How can I protect myself from getting rabies?

- Do not feed or handle wild animals.
- Avoid contact with stray animals or pets other than your own.

How do I prevent animals from entering my home and property?

- Animal proof your home and yard. Make sure all garbage containers have tight fitting lids, do not leave pet food or water outside, do not allow rainwater to collect in outdoor containers or equipment and keep yard free of garbage and debris.
- Screen off vents to attics and other areas that could provide shelter for bats.