

Why is my pet being confined?

Porcupine Health Unit, Community Health Inspection Services, Control of Infectious Diseases

What is rabies?

Rabies is a viral disease that attacks the central nervous system of warm-blooded animals, including humans. It can cause death if not treated immediately. In Canada, the animals that most often found to have rabies are bats, foxes, skunks, and raccoons.

How is it transmitted?

Rabies is transmitted through saliva -- primarily via bite wounds. It can also be spread by infected saliva entering an open cut or wound, or contacting a mucous membrane, such as those in the mouth, nasal cavity or eyes. When the virus enters an animal's body, it spreads through the nerves to reach the brain.

Once it's in the brain, it multiplies quickly, and that's when symptoms appear.

Be aware that an animal can pass on the disease a few days before showing clinical signs of rabies. This is why your pet has been placed on a ten day confinement period. If your pet is still alive and well for follow-up at the end of the ten days, then there is no risk of rabies to the victim.

How long does it take to develop?

The time between exposure to the virus and showing signs of the disease, may be from two weeks to many months. Its length of time depends on a number of factors, including the strain of virus, and the location of the bite. The closer the

bite is to the brain, the sooner the symptoms will appear.

How can I tell if an animal has rabies?

Animals with rabies may show a variety of different signs which relate to the effect of the virus on the brain. The animal will behave differently, for example, a wild animal will be more friendly than usual, and a usually friendly animal will be more aggressive. Paralysis may make the animal appear clumsy and froth at the mouth.

What should I do if I think an animal is rabid?

If it's a wild animal, stay away from it. Owners of pets and livestock should keep their animals confined (away from other people and animals), and follow up with the veterinarian.

What should be done if a person has been exposed to a suspect animal?

Immediately wash the wound or affected area with soap and water for at least five minutes and apply an antiseptic. Remove any clothing that may have been contaminated. Get the name and contact information (address, phone number, license plate, etc) of the animal owner.

Go to the nearest hospital emergency department. The doctor who treats you will notify the local medical officer of health. The Porcupine Health Unit will follow up to ensure that you are protected from the disease.

What can I do to help prevent the spread of rabies?

- Vaccinate your pets against rabies as recommended by your veterinarian.
- Don't let your pets roam free.
- Avoid animals that are behaving strangely.
- Keep a safe distance from wildlife, even if they look healthy. Do not attempt to raise orphaned wild animals.
- Teach your children not to handle wildlife - or pet animals that they do not know.
- Report all animal contact incidents to the Porcupine Health Unit.

Rabies is a reportable disease. This means that if you suspect that an animal is rabid, or you think that your animal has been exposed to rabies, contact your local health inspector or call 1-800-461-1818.



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www.porcupinehu.on.ca

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