



Clinton County Health Department

133 Margaret Street, Plattsburgh, New York 12901-2926

"Working Together for a Healthier Community"

www.clintonhealth.org



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Administration Division

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News Release

Date: April 11, 2018
For Immediate Release
Contact: 518-565-4840

Puppy Tests Positive for Rabies

Plattsburgh, April 10, 2018. Clinton County Health Department (CCHD) is investigating a case of rabies in a puppy. The puppy was a stray in Canada that was transported to the Altona area on March 5, 2018. The puppy began to show symptoms of illness on April 1st and died on April 3rd. Post-mortem testing revealed rabies as the cause. The time between exposure to the rabies virus and the onset of symptoms varies so it is not known where or when the puppy contracted the disease. CCHD is working with the owner to identify humans and animals that may have had contact with the puppy. Rabies is a deadly viral disease that affects the nervous system and is 100 percent fatal once symptoms develop. Timely vaccination and preventive treatment can stop the onset of symptoms and should be administered to those who may have been exposed to rabies.

"All individuals should exercise care with stray animals," noted Judy Ross, a Principal Public Health Sanitarian at the Clinton County Health Department. "When an animal is a stray, its vaccination status is unknown. There is also no way to know if it has been exposed to rabies or other diseases."

The following are standard precautions regarding animal rabies.

- Have pets (dogs, cats, and ferrets) vaccinated against rabies as soon as they reach 3 months of age. New York State law requires that all dogs, cats and ferrets be vaccinated against rabies by 4 months of age. Vaccination is also recommended for livestock with frequent human contact.
- Report all animal bites to your local health department. It is very important that follow up is done on the biting animal to protect the health of the person bitten. If the biting animal is not available, the person bitten may need rabies vaccinations to prevent the disease.
- Spaying and neutering your pets decreases undesirable behavior, like aggression and roaming and reduces the number of unwanted animals that may not be properly cared for or regularly vaccinated.

Ms. Ross also reminds pet owners to keep pets under control. "Pets should never be left outside unattended. If your pet gets outside, look it over for any wounds or signs that it fought with another animal and keep an eye out for signs of illness."

The New York State Department of Health website cites several signs of rabies in animals, the first of which may be a change in behavior. The animal may become unusually aggressive or tame. It may lose its fear of people and natural enemies. A wild animal may appear affectionate and friendly. It may become excited or irritable and attack anything in its path. Staggering, convulsions, choking, frothing at the mouth and paralysis are sometimes seen. Many animals will make very unusual sounds. Infected animals usually die within one week after showing signs of rabies.

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"Persons who have any physical mobility or other needs, call the telephone number above to arrange for accommodations"

Due to requirements for vaccination, rabies in pets is rare in New York State, however wild animals can spread rabies to pets and to humans. These additional rabies precautions should be followed.

- Use caution around all wild animals especially raccoons, skunks and foxes. Talk to children now about not approaching wildlife, and to immediately tell a parent or adult if they see a wild animal.
- Secure all garbage in containers that will prevent access by wild animals.
- Do not feed wildlife or stray animals and discourage them from seeking food near your home. Feed pets indoors, leaving food outside will attract strays or wildlife.
- Report all contact with bats, including finding a bat in the same room with a sleeping person, to your local health department
- To prevent the spread of rabies, no one should transport or relocate trapped wild animals.
- Puppies, kittens and other small pets should not be left outside alone (even in a fenced area).
- If your pet fights with a wild animal, put gloves on before you handle the pet. Call your veterinarian or the local health department for advice.
- If an unvaccinated pet comes in contact with a rabid or suspected rabid animal, the pet must be quarantined for six months or euthanized.
- Vaccinated pets that come in contact with a rabid or suspected rabid animal must be given a booster rabies vaccination within five days of the contact.

For more information on rabies, contact the Clinton County Health Department at 518-565-4870 or online at www.clintonhealth.org.

About the Clinton County Health Department:

The Health Department is an accredited full service department serving the residents of Clinton County. The Health Department's Mission is to improve and protect the health, well-being and environment of the people of Clinton County. Visit www.ClintonHealth.org for more information.

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