



County of Rockland Department of Health NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Rockland County Department of Health warns residents a rabid cat and rabid raccoon were found in Clarkstown

Pomona, NY – The Rockland County Department of Health is alerting residents that a raccoon and a feral cat have tested positive for rabies in Clarkstown this year. As a result, one resident is undergoing rabies prophylaxis and two dogs had to get rabies booster shots.

The Rockland County Department of Health urges all residents to take these common steps to avoid exposure to rabies:

- If you are bitten, scratched or have contact with an animal you believe to be rabid, immediately wash the wound with soap and water, seek medical attention and report the incident to the Rockland County Department of Health (845-364-2656).
- To avoid unnecessary rabies treatments, all potentially rabid animals that may have exposed someone should be confined and observed or tested for rabies. Report all potentially rabid animals and possible exposures to the Rockland County Department of Health.
- Although a bite from a rabid animal is the primary way for rabies to be transmitted, contact the Rockland County Department of Health regarding any contact with an animal that may be rabid.
- Avoid contact with any wild animal. Be suspicious of wild animals that are unusually tame or aggressive, especially those that attack your pets. Do not attract raccoons to your yard by feeding them. Avoid contact with any stray animals, especially cats.
- Do not handle pets with bare hands for several hours after any involvement with a suspected rabid wild animal. Pet owners should keep a pair of thick gloves handy for just such situations, and should bathe pets after wildlife encounters.
- Avoid contact with the saliva of any animal that may be rabid.
- Do not release bats found in homes or cabins and seek advice from Rockland County Department of Health about what to do with the bat. Immediately report any possible contact with bats, and such situations as bats in rooms or camp cabins with sleeping persons, unattended children, or individuals with mental impairment.

To protect your pet, the Health Department will hold a rabies vaccination clinic on Sunday, April 25, 2010 from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m. at the Fire Training Center, 35 Firemen's Memorial Drive in Pomona. There is no charge for the vaccination, but a \$5 donation per pet will be accepted to help defray costs.

Animal rabies continues to be a serious public health problem in Rockland County. The County Department of Health reminds all residents to make sure that their animals are immunized against rabies and that the vaccinations are kept up to date.

New York State law requires all dogs, cats and domesticated ferrets to be vaccinated against rabies by four months of age, and owners can be fined up to \$200 if they fail to get their pets vaccinated and keep

them up to date. If an unvaccinated pet, or one that's overdue on its vaccination, comes in contact with a rabid or suspected rabid animal, the pet must either be destroyed or strictly quarantined for six months. Vaccinated animals that come in contact with wild animals can be given booster vaccinations, but these shots must be given within five days of exposure.

For more information on animal rabies or the vaccine please call the Rockland County Department of Health at 845-364-2594.

Commissioner of Health Dr. Joan Facelle reminds residents about the importance of having their pets vaccinated for rabies. The Department of Health will hold a rabies vaccination clinic on Sunday, April 25, 2010 from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m. at the Fire Training Center, 35 Firemen's Memorial Drive in Pomona. There is no charge for the vaccination, but a \$5 donation per pet will be accepted to help defray cost.

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