



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 21, 2010

**For more information contact:
Cumberland County Animal Services
910-321-6852**

CONFIRMED CASE OF RABIES IN CUMBERLAND COUNTY

This morning the State Public Health Lab in Raleigh confirmed a case of rabies in Cumberland County. A raccoon was picked up by Animal Services on Wilmington Highway in Fayetteville on the evening of Monday, April 19, and was sent to the State Lab for testing. Residents in the vicinity should remain alert for sick or abnormal acting wildlife. Officials will be in the vicinity to alert residents of the incident.

This is the third confirmed case of rabies in the county this year; all three have been in raccoons. In late March, a rabid raccoon was picked up on Abbottswood Drive in Eastwood Village; and on April 14, the state confirmed that a raccoon picked up in the Cedar Creek community had rabies.

All pet owners are urged to check the vaccination status of their pets. If pets are not vaccinated or are due for a booster shot, they should be taken to any local veterinarian for rabies vaccination immediately.

The first sign of rabies in animals is a change in behavior. Animals may become aggressive, attacking for no reason, or they may become very quiet. Wild animals can lose their fear of people and act tame. Rabid animals may walk in a circle, drag a leg, or fall over. Some cannot swallow so they are not able to eat or drink and often drool. Animals usually die within a week after first becoming ill.

Avoiding wild animals and keeping your distance from stray dogs and cats is the first step in preventing an animal bite. Any pet, which appears to have been in a fight while outside, should be handled very cautiously and seen by a veterinarian.

If you are bitten or scratched by an animal:

- Immediately wash the wound with lots of soap and water. Seek medical attention/advice.
- Call Animal Services at 321-6852 Monday-Friday 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Call the Sheriff's office at 323-1500 after 5 p.m., weekends and holidays.
- Go to the emergency room.

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It is also important to vaccinate your pets for rabies and keep their shots current. Pet owners are reminded that all dogs and cats must be vaccinated against rabies, as required by N.C. State law. Pet owners are subject to a fine of \$100 for each unvaccinated dog or cat. Pets must be vaccinated when they reach the age of four months.

The Health Department is conducting rabies vaccination clinics for dogs and cats from 4 to 6 p.m. every Tuesday and Thursday in April at three different locations each day. Three days of clinics still remain this month. The cost is \$10 per animal. For more information, call the Environmental Health Division of the Cumberland County Public Health Department 433-3660 or Cumberland County Animal Services at 321-6852.

Dates and locations are available online at
http://www.co.cumberland.nc.us/health/healthy_tips/rabies_clinics.aspx.