



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Animal Control

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TWO SUSPECTED RABIES CASES IN RACCOONS

FAYETTEVILLE - This afternoon the State Public Health Lab in Raleigh reported two “unsatisfactory results” of rabies in Cumberland County. For public safety reasons, they are being treated as positive cases although test results were inconclusive.

Two raccoons that were being attacked by two to three dogs were picked up on July 28 by Animal Control in the 300 block of Abbottswood Drive in the Ramsey Street area. The raccoons were 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.

There have now been 10 rabies cases in the county since January 1.

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 a 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 under running water for at least 10 minutes with lots of soap. Seek medical attention/advice.
- Call Animal Control 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.

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 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.

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