



**HUNTERDON COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC SAFETY AND HEALTH SERVICES
Division of Health**

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Hunterdon County Division of Health reminds residents of the importance of rabies prevention, after recent death in Florida child

Recently, a child in Florida died from rabies after exposure to an infected bat after a family member brought the animal home. For the complete story, www.orlandosentinel.com/news/orange/os-rabies-death-ryker-roque-20180115-story.html#

Tragically, the child's death was preventable with appropriate treatment after the exposure. Although rabies is nearly 100% fatal in humans if untreated, humans can be protected by receiving rabies prophylaxis after exposure. The Hunterdon County Division of Health reminds residents not to touch or feed wild or stray animals, and to seek medical treatment if a bite or scratch occurs. Any bite or scratch from an unknown animal should be reported to the county Division of Health at 908-788-1351.

Rabies (ray-beez), is a deadly disease caused by a virus. The virus is found in the saliva of a rabid animal and is transmitted by a bite, or possibly by saliva contamination of an open cut or the eyes. Left untreated, rabies attacks the nervous system and causes death.

What is the Hunterdon County Division of Health Rabies Control Program?

Residents of Hunterdon County who are bitten by, or have had contact with saliva from an animal should notify the Hunterdon County Division of Health (908-788-1351) and seek medical care. Residents can also contact their municipal police departments. Hunterdon County Division of Health staff will consult with the person bitten or exposed to rabies and make recommendations regarding rabies prophylaxis to their health care provider. If the suspect rabid animal is available, the Health Division may also arrange for testing or confinement of animals.

What animals get rabies?

Only mammals, including people, can get rabies. Rabies occurs most often in wildlife, particularly raccoons, bats, skunks, groundhogs, and foxes. These animals represent 95% of the cases in the United States. In New Jersey (NJ), cats account for the vast majority of domestic animal rabies cases. Farm animals, dogs, and other domestic pets can also become infected so take measures to keep wild animals from entering houses, barns and garages. Small rodents such as rats, mice, chipmunks, and squirrels are rarely infected. (NOTE – it is illegal in NJ to keep wildlife as pets)

How can we protect ourselves from rabies?

- Vaccinate your pets against rabies and keep vaccinations up-to-date.
- Do not feed or touch wild animals.
- Avoid contact with strays or pets other than your own.
- Report unusual behavior in stray or wild animals to municipal animal control.
- Report all animal bites immediately the Hunterdon County Division of Public Health at (908) 788-1351.

For more information, www.nj.gov/health/cd/documents/faq/rabies_faq.pdf