

PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY – IMMEDIATE RELEASE
RABIES ADVISORY

A raccoon found on Montague Ave in Scotch Plains was tested positive for rabies.

Rabies is caused by a virus that can infect all warm-blooded mammals, including humans. The rabies virus is found in the saliva of a rabid animal and is transmitted by a bite, or possibly by contamination of an open cut with fresh saliva from a rabid animal. New Jersey is enzootic for raccoon and bat variants of rabies. Bats, raccoons, skunks, groundhogs, foxes, cats, and dogs represent about 95% of animals diagnosed with rabies in the United States.

Rabies Prevention Guidelines

The Rahway-Scotch Plains Health Department is advising residents to follow these guidelines in order to prevent rabies from being transmitted to themselves or their pets:

1. Immediately report a bite from a wild or domestic animal to your local health department.

Wash animal bite wounds thoroughly with soap and water as soon as possible after the bite. Contamination of open cuts or scratches with saliva of potentially rabid animals should also be washed off immediately. Consult a physician as soon as possible.

2. Immediately report any wild animal showing signs of unusual behavior and avoid any contact with the animal.

Signs of unusual animal behavior may include:

- ° moves slowly
- ° appear sick
- ° have paralysis
- ° have increased drooling
- ° act aggressive
- ° may act as if it is tame
- ° have problems swallowing
- ° have difficulty moving
- ° have an increase of saliva
- ° bite at everything if excited

3. Be sure that all family pets are up to date on their rabies vaccination. If unsure, please call your veterinarian.

4. Animal proof your home and yard. Make sure all garbage containers have tight fitting lids, do not leave pet food or water outside, do not allow rainwater to collect in outdoor containers or equipment and keep yard free of garbage and debris.
5. NEVER feed or handle wild animals.
6. Avoid contact with stray pets.
7. Try to prevent your pets from coming into contact with wild animals.
8. Screen off vents to attics and other areas that could provide shelter for bats.
9. Ensure all cats & dogs are licensed with the Borough.

More information on rabies can be found at:

<https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/rabies.shtml>

Or by calling:

The Scotch Plains Health Department at (908) 322-6700, ext. 309, 310, 306
Plainfield Area Humane Society Animal Control at 908-754-0300