



Oakland County Health Division Reports Confirmed Rabies in Skunk

Oakland County, Michigan sent this bulletin at 03/15/2019 05:43 PM EDT

For Immediate Release



HEALTH DIVISION

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NEWS RELEASE

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Health Officer

Oakland County Health Division Reports Confirmed Rabies in Skunk

March 15, 2019, Pontiac, Mich. – Oakland County Health Division reports a confirmed case of rabies in a skunk removed from Rochester Hills. The Health Division strongly urges residents to reduce rabies exposure by staying away from wild animals such as skunks, bats, raccoons, foxes, stray cats and dogs.

"Our instinct is to befriend and pet an animal that seems friendly or help one that is injured," said Leigh-Anne Stafford, health officer for Oakland County. "But as a rule, avoid stray and wild animals to protect yourself against rabies."

If a wild animal is found behaving strangely, call the Oakland County Animal Shelter and Pet Adoption Center at 248-858-1070 for assistance. If you or your household pet is bitten by any wild animal or an animal unknown to you, wash the affected area thoroughly with soap and water and seek medical or veterinary attention immediately. To report an animal bite, call the Health Division at 248-858-1286.

"Rabies is present in our communities and is most often found in bats, raccoons, skunks, and foxes," Stafford said. "People and their pets need to be careful and avoid encounters with unfamiliar animals."

The rabies virus is found in the saliva of infected animals and is spread through bites or scratches. There are simple steps everyone can take to protect themselves from rabies:

- Have pets vaccinated regularly. This will protect them if exposed to animals with the disease and prevent them from becoming a carrier and infecting humans.
- Do not handle stray, wild, or dead animals.
- Call local animal control experts for help if an animal is acting strangely, including:
 - Having problems swallowing
 - Exhibiting lots of drool or saliva
 - Appearing tamer than you would expect
 - Biting at everything
 - Having trouble moving or is paralyzed
- Keep pets indoors or supervised to limit their exposure to wild animals that may be rabid.
- Use a leash when walking dogs or keep them in a fenced-in yard.
- Do not feed or put water for pets outside
- Keep garbage securely covered, as these items may attract wild or stray animals.

More information about rabies can be found on the Health Division's website at oakgov.com/health or by contacting Nurse on Call at 800-848-5533 or noc@oakgov.com. Nurse on Call is available 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

For MEDIA INQUIRIES ONLY: Contact Leigh-Anne Stafford, health officer for Oakland County Health Division, at 248-858-1410.



NURSE ON CALL PUBLIC HEALTH INFORMATION HOTLINE

800.848.5533 NOC@OAKGOV.COM

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