



MIDDLESEX COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Ronald G. Rios,
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Committee of Public
Health and Education

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PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY – May 26, 2009 Rabies Advisory

A skunk tested positive for rabies in Monroe Township, Middlesex County. The skunk was found in the vicinity of Cornell Avenue and Monmouth Road. This is the second positive rabies specimen in Monroe Township this year, and the third in Middlesex County.

Immediately report any bites from a wild or domestic animal to your local health department and consult a physician as soon as possible.

Rabies is caused by a virus which can infect all warm-blooded mammals, including man. 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. 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 **Middlesex County Public 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.**
 - Signs of unusual animal behavior could be that the animal may:
 - move slowly
 - may act as if it is tame
 - appear sick
 - have problems swallowing
 - have an increase of saliva
 - have increased drooling
 - act aggressive
 - have difficulty moving
 - have paralysis
 - bite at everything if excited

Residents should avoid any contact with the animal and call your local animal control officer or local police department.

3. **Be sure that all family pets are up to date on their rabies vaccination.** If unsure please call your veterinarian. Call your local health department for free rabies vaccination clinic availability.
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. **Do not feed or handle wild animals.**
6. **Avoid contact with stray animals or pets other than your own.**
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.**

Additional information can be obtained by calling an Inspection Division Supervisor for Middlesex County Public Health Department, at 732-745-3100.