

Dec 05, 2019

RABIES ALERT ISSUED FOR ESCAMBIA COUNTY, FLORIDA



Contact:

Media Desk
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Pensacola, Fla. – The Florida Department of Health in Escambia County has issued a rabies alert for Escambia County, Florida. This alert covers all of Escambia County and will last for 60 days. Alerts are designed to increase awareness to the public, but they should not give a false sense of security to areas that have not been named as under an alert. All residents and visitors in Escambia County should be aware that rabies is present in the wild animal population and domestic animals are at risk if not vaccinated. The public is asked to maintain a heightened awareness that rabies is active in Escambia County.

On December 5, 2019, FDOH-Escambia received a positive test result for rabies in a raccoon which was anonymously left in a box outside of a local wildlife sanctuary. The following immediate action should be taken:

1. The individual(s) who left the raccoon should be immediately evaluated by a medical professional for rabies exposure. They are also requested to contact FDOH-Escambia's Epidemiology Program staff by calling 850-595-6683.
2. Any individuals who have been bitten or scratched by a raccoon, or other animal whose rabies vaccination status is unknown, should be immediately evaluated by a medical professional and report the injury to the Florida Department of Health in Escambia County at 850-595-6700.

About Rabies

An animal with rabies could infect other wild animals or domestic animals that have not been vaccinated against rabies. All domestic animals should be vaccinated against rabies and humans should avoid all wildlife contact, especially with raccoons, bats, and foxes. Rabies is a disease of the nervous system and is usually fatal to warm-blooded animals and to humans. The only treatment for human exposure to rabies is rabies-specific immune globulin and rabies immunization. Appropriate treatment started soon after the exposure will protect an exposed person from the disease.

Reduce Risks for Rabies Transmission and Exposure

Residents and visitors are advised to maintain the following precautions:

- Vaccinate pets against rabies and keep vaccinations up to date.
- Keep pets under direct supervision so they do not come in contact with wild animals. If a pet is bitten by a wild animal, seek veterinary assistance for the animal immediately.
- Bring in pet food at night and secure trash cans with fasteners, or place trash containers in the garage, so they do not attract wild or stray animals.
- Never adopt wild animals or bring them into your home.
- Teach children never to handle unfamiliar animals, wild or domestic, even if they appear friendly.
- Call animal control services to remove any stray domestic animals from your neighborhood; for wild animals, contact a private wildlife removal specialist.
- Prevent bats from entering living quarters or occupied spaces in homes, churches, schools, and other similar areas, where they might come in contact with people and pets.
- Persons who have been bitten or scratched by wild or domestic animals should seek medical attention and report the injury to the Florida Department of Health in Escambia County at 850-595-6700.

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About the Florida Department of Health

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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