

DATE: May 28, 2020 **END DATE:** June 30, 2020

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RE: **Genesee County Health Department confirms rabies in skunk**

A rabid skunk has been identified in Flushing, the first confirmed animal rabies case in Genesee County this year. Human exposure to the skunk is unlikely. The Genesee County Health Department (GCHD) wants to remind residents that wild animals become active this time of year, which means the possibility of exposure to rabies is increasing. GCHD wants to advise the public, especially children, to avoid contact with wild, stray, and dead animals to protect yourself against rabies.

Rabies is a virus that affects the nervous system of mammals, including humans. A person may contract rabies through a bite, scratch, or saliva from an infected animal. A potential rabies exposure should never be taken lightly. Treatment is available and effective for rabies if medical attention is received shortly after contact. If untreated, rabies is fatal.

Vaccinating all pets under your care with the rabies vaccine is essential to promoting animal and human health. Whether animals are kept indoors or outdoors it is important to make sure they are all protected against rabies. Exposures may occur even in the most unlikely situations so protection against rabies is essential for all animals for which a licensed vaccine exists. This includes dogs, cats, ferrets, horses, cattle, and sheep.

How to prevent the spread and protect yourself from rabies:

- Keep vaccinations up-to-date for all dogs, cats, ferrets and other animals you own. A licensed veterinarian should give the vaccines, and the appropriate boosters can be discussed based on the guidelines.
- Seek immediate veterinary assistance for your pet if your pet is bitten by a wild animal or exposed to a bat.
- If you or a family member is bitten or scratched by a wild animal, immediately wash the wound with soap and hot water. Contact your physician and state or local health department for further guidance regarding potential rabies exposure to evaluate the need for rabies post-exposure vaccination.



- Do not handle stray, wild, or dead animals. Teach children to never handle unfamiliar animals, wild or domestic, even if they appear friendly.
- Never adopt wild animals, bring them into your home, or try to nurse sick, wild animals.
- Keep pets indoors, supervise when outside, and always use a leash when walking to limit their exposure to wild animals that may be rabid.

For removal of nuisance animals, please contact a permitted contractor, with the Department of Natural Resources, preferably one with both liability insurance and workers compensation insurance. Ensure that the contractor is permitted for the specific animal you wish to be removed. A list of wildlife damage and nuisance animal control contractors in your particular area can be found here:

https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-350-79136_79608_83071-137162--,00.html. For questions regarding domestic animals such as dogs or cats, please contact Genesee County Animal Control at 810-732-1660. For questions regarding human health, contact GCHD at 810-257-1017.

Genesee County Health Department. Your Health. Our Work

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