

Keep Raccoons from Returning

After raccoons leave your property, take action to make sure they don't return.

- **Make sure that all raccoons have left your property** and that no dens with raccoon pups remain.
- **Find out where raccoons entered your home** by checking for torn window screens, openings in the walls, roof or underside of eaves or overhangs and holes in sheds or garages.
- **Permanently seal all entrances.** Raccoons will return if shelter and food are available.
- **Periodically check your home and property** to make sure there are no new holes or openings.



For more information on raccoons, rabies and protecting your home from pests, call **311** or visit **[nyc.gov/health/rabies](https://www.nyc.gov/health/rabies)**

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Raccoons live in all five boroughs of New York City. They can easily adapt to live wherever food and shelter are available. Raccoons living on your property or in your house can cause problems:

- Raccoons can have **rabies** and may bite you or your pets.
- Raccoons can **damage** your home and property.



Protect Yourself and Your Pets from Rabies

All mammals can get rabies, a deadly virus that attacks the brain and nervous system. Infected raccoons can give rabies to you and your pets through bites and scratches.

A rabid raccoon may

- Appear sick or injured
- Stumble or have trouble standing
- Convulse or shake uncontrollably
- Act unusually friendly or aggressive

If you are bitten or scratched by a raccoon, wash the wound with lots of soap and water. See your doctor as soon as possible or visit the emergency room. Call 311 to report a sick raccoon or if a raccoon scratches or bites you or your pet.

If you own dogs or cats, make sure that their rabies vaccinations are up to date, it's the law. All pets 4 months of age or older need a rabies shot and must be revaccinated every one to four years, depending on the vaccine used.



Protect Your Home and Property from Damage

Raccoons are not picky eaters; they will even eat your trash. Raccoons will also live almost anywhere, including under rock piles, fireplace chimneys, hollow walls, attics, the underside of overhangs and beams or sewers. Over time, they can damage your property and become a nuisance.

Prevent Raccoons from Entering Your Home

- **Always feed pets indoors** to avoid attracting raccoons and other pests.
- **Keep your garbage and recycling areas clean**, and make sure these containers are tightly sealed.
- **Buy a raccoon-resistant trash container**, or place a weight on the lid of your garbage bin.
- **Seal all openings** to your home, garage and outdoor sheds.
- **Replace torn screens and fix broken windows.**
- **Trim tree branches** that raccoons could use to climb onto your roof.
- **Sprinkle cayenne pepper** around your property as raccoons find it irritating. (Use cayenne pepper with caution; it can be very irritating to pets.)
- **Fence in areas** underneath decks.

Drive Raccoons Out of Your Home

Raccoons look for safe, quiet areas to set up dens, especially female raccoons with litters. An uncomfortable environment may cause raccoons to leave your property.

- **Never attempt to capture** or trap a raccoon.
- **Use bright or flashing lights** or play loud music in your attic or other areas where raccoons live.
- You may need to **hire a licensed professional Nuisance Wildlife Control Operator**. Visit the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation at dec.ny.gov, and search wildlife control to find a wildlife trapper near you.