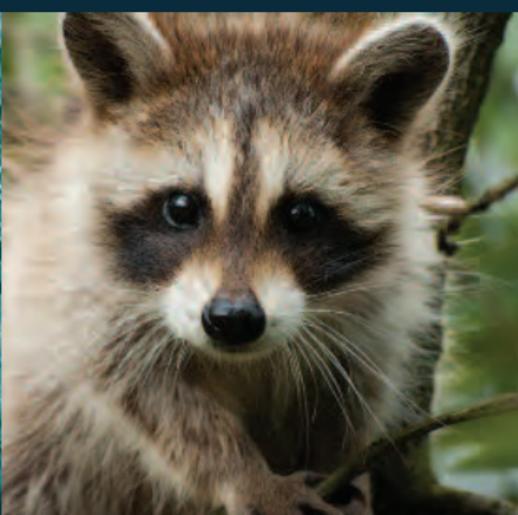




# RABIES

PROTECTING YOUR PET



# PROTECTING YOUR PET FROM RABIES

## Frequently Asked Questions

### BACKGROUND

#### **What is rabies?**

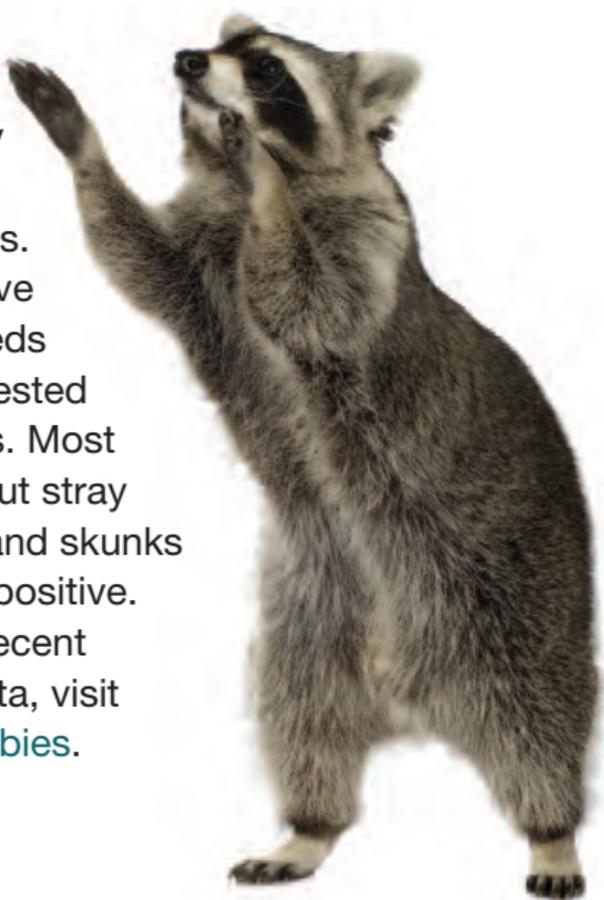
Rabies is a virus that attacks people's and animals' brains. It is almost always fatal, but it can be prevented.

#### **How is rabies transmitted?**

Rabies is most often passed through the saliva of a rabid animal when it bites a person or another animal. Any mammal or person can become infected with rabies, but rabies vaccines can help protect cats, dogs and people against infection.

#### **Which animals generally carry rabies?**

In New York City, raccoons and bats are generally responsible for transmitting rabies. Throughout the five boroughs, hundreds of animals have tested positive for rabies. Most were raccoons, but stray cats, opossums and skunks have also tested positive. To get the most recent New York City data, visit [nyc.gov/health/rabies](https://nyc.gov/health/rabies).



**Rabies has been found in all five New York City boroughs, most often in raccoons and bats.**

## SYMPTOMS AND PREVENTION

### What are the symptoms of rabies?

Because rabies attacks the brain, rabid animals often act strangely. Symptoms happen suddenly and may include behavior changes (such as withdrawal or extreme aggression), avoiding food and water, increased drool and trouble walking.



### How can I protect my dog or cat?

- **Vaccinate** your dogs and cats—it's the law. In New York City, all puppies and kittens should get their first rabies shot between 3 and 4 months of age. They must also get a booster shot one year later and then again every one to four years, depending on the vaccine used. Even indoor dogs and cats are at risk if they escape outside or if a rabid bat enters your home.
- License your dog. It's the law and it's the best way to help you find your dog should it get lost.
- Leash and monitor your dog in public places.

**Rabies vaccination is the best way to protect your pet against rabies.**



## **PUBLIC HEALTH**

### **What happens if my dog or cat is bitten by a wild animal or by another animal that might have rabies?**

- If the biting animal can be captured, call 311 to find out if it should be tested for rabies and to make arrangements for capture.
- Contact your vet immediately.
- If your pet has a current rabies vaccine, it will receive a booster vaccine. You will then have to confine and observe your pet in your home for 45 days.
- If your pet is not vaccinated or is overdue, it may be quarantined for several months in a veterinary hospital. If your pet is suspected of having rabies, it may have to be euthanized.



### **What happens if my dog or cat bites someone?**

Give your contact information to the person bitten and monitor your pet for rabies symptoms at home for 10 days (even if your pet is vaccinated). The Health Department will contact you to follow up. If your pet does not show symptoms, the person bitten will not need shots to prevent rabies.



**To report animal bites or for more information about rabies, call 311.**



**Any bite from a wild or stray animal should be considered a possible exposure to rabies.**

### **What should I do if I am exposed to rabies?**

If you are bitten by a wild or stray animal or if you are exposed to a bat, contact a doctor immediately. If the animal tests positive for rabies or if it can't be tested, you may need to get shots to prevent rabies. This usually involves a shot called RIG (or Rabies Immune Globulin) at the bite site and a series of rabies shots over a two-week period.

**For more information about rabies, visit [nyc.gov/health](https://nyc.gov/health) or call 311.**



**In the United States, bats are responsible for most human rabies cases. If you find a bat in your home, call 311 to see if it should be tested for rabies.**



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