The primary rabies vector species in NYC include raccoons and bats. Raccoon and bat rabies have been reported in all five boroughs of NYC. Raccoon rabies is spread primarily through bites, and the raccoon is the most common cause of rabies-related deaths.

Veterinary Public Health Services (VPHS)
Animal Bite Unit (ABU)
646-632-6404 and 646-632-6074
Accepts and investigates reports of animal bites, informs animal owners of rabies testing and life-threatening rabies prophylaxis. Other VPHS personnel investigate public health issues and events.

Bureau of Communicable Disease (BCD)
Zoonotic, Influenza and Vector-borne Disease Unit (ZIVDU)
347-396-2600
Provides consultation for rabies postexposure and preexposure prophylaxis and titers testing.

General Information
Dog Licensing—All dogs in NYC must be licensed. Applications are available through 311 or online at nyc.gov/doglicense.
Rabies Vaccination—All dogs and cats, four months and older, must be actively vaccinated against rabies.
Illegal Animals in NYC—Several types of animals are illegal to own and may only be brought into NYC under certain circumstances and with prior approval. Non-permitted or illegal animals may be reported by calling 311. Animals brought into NYC for exhibit, motion pictures, TV commercials and educational exhibitions must meet specific requirements and obtain a permit. For a list of illegal animals and information about permits, visit nyc.gov/html/doh/html/licenses/permit.shtml/rabies.
Clusters of Dead Animals or Birds—Call 311 to report a dead mammal, clusters of ten or more dead birds of any type or clusters of three or more dead water birds.
Infectious Disease Consultations—Provides consultation for rabies postexposure and preexposure prophylaxis and rabies testing with the DOHMH rabies laboratory.

On suspicion, call BCD immediately to report any of the following:
- Anthrax
- Brucellosis
- Ebola
- Influenza caused by a novel influenza virus with pandemic potential
- Monkeypox
- Rabies
- SARS
- Tularemia
- Influenza caused by a novel influenza strain with pandemic potential

Call BCD at 347-396-2600.


Reporting Animal Diseases
License Requirements and applications for animal boarding, training, grooming, pet shops or shelters can be obtained by calling VPHS or online at nyc.gov/html/doh/html/licenses/permit.shtml/rabies.
Animal Related Complaints—To file a complaint about a pet shop, boarding, training or grooming establishment or other animal issue, call 311.
Responsible Pet Ownership Booklets can be ordered by calling 311. They can also be downloaded by visiting nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/hais/abu/rabies_booklet.shtml.

Upon diagnosis, call or fax BCD within 24 hours to report any of the following:
- Arboviral encephalitides
- Leptospirosis
- Pneumonic plague
- Salmonellosis
- Tuberculosis
- Rocky Mountain spotted fever

Complete an Animal Disease Report Form and fax it to 347-396-2753.

For more information on reportable diseases, diagnostic assistance or infection control guidance, call BCD or visit nyc.gov/html/doh/html/diseases/zoo.shtml.

Rabies Information
Vector Species—The primary rabies vector species in NYC include raccoons and bats. Raccoon and bat rabies have been reported in all five boroughs, although the epizootiologic variation varies each year. Other animals testing positive for rabies in NYC are typically infected after a bite from a rabid raccoon and have included skunks and cats. To get the most updated surveillance data regarding rabies, please visit nyc.gov/health/rabies.
Transmission—Rabies can be transmitted from an infected animal through a bite or through contamination of a fresh, open wound with saliva or neural tissue. Bites or other exposures to humans from rabies vector species or any animal known or suspected of being rabid should immediately be reported and evaluated by BCD or a health care provider to assess the need for rabies postexposure prophylaxis.

New York City Laws:
- Rabies Vaccination—Any person who owns or harbors a dog or cat four months of age or older in New York City shall have such animals actively immunized against rabies. Actively immunized shall mean injection of a rabies vaccine that meets the standards prescribed by the United States Department of Agriculture for interstate sale and is administered according to the manufacturer’s instructions by or under the direct supervision of a duly licensed veterinarian.
- Reporting Rabid Animals—Any veterinarian, staff member or animal owner who is aware of an animal affected with or suspected of having rabies shall immediately report it to VPHS. The animal should be confined in a manner that does not pose a threat to the persons handling it, and surrendered to the DOHMH for rabies testing.
- Management of Animals Exposed to Rabies—Any dog, cat or domestic ferret or livestock which has been bitten by or otherwise exposed to a rabid or potentially rabid animal must be reported to the DOHMH. Please refer to the algorithm for additional guidance.

Within the DOHMH, there are two Bureaus that deal with veterinary related issues: the Bureau of Communicable Disease (BCD) houses the Zoonotic, Influenza and Vector-borne Disease Unit (ZIVDU), and the Bureau of Pest Control and Veterinary Affairs houses the Office of Veterinary Public Health Services (VPHS).

Call 311 to report a dead mammal, clusters of ten or more dead birds of any type or clusters of three or more dead water birds. For more information, visit nyc.gov/html/doh/html/animals-bite-rpt.shtml.

Infectious Disease Consultations—Provides consultation for rabies postexposure and preexposure prophylaxis and rabies testing with the DOHMH rabies laboratory.
Management of Dogs/Cats/Ferrets\(^3\)/Livestock\(^4\) that Bite Humans

All animal bites are reportable to the DOHMH and are usually made by a physical or the person bitten. The ABU within the Office of VPHS coordinates follow-up with the animal’s owner and the person bitten to ensure that the animal is managed appropriately. Healthy dogs, cats, ferrets and livestock that have bitten someone can be watched for a 10-day observation period at the owner’s home. Questions regarding human rabies postexposure prophylaxis should be directed to BCD.

Management of Pets with a Rabies Exposure

A rabies exposure is defined as any bite or incident in which saliva or central nervous system (CNS) tissue from a rabid or potentially rabid animal did or could have had direct contact with mucous membrane or a break in the skin of a domestic animal.

Pet dog/cat/ferret\(^3\)/livestock\(^4\) presents with any of the following:
1. Exposure to a rabies positive animal
2. Exposure to a rabies vector species (RVS)\(^3\), or wild carnivore that is unavailable for testing
3. Exposure to a rabid acting animal\(^3\) that is unavailable for testing
4. Wound of unknown origin\(^3\)

1. Raccoon Vector Species (RVS): Raccoon, bat, skunk, fox, coyote and mangoo.
2. Suspect rabid animal: Any carnivore that is unavailable for testing or any mammal with illness or behavior consistent with rabies that is unavailable for testing. Exposures to other domestic animals may warrant further investigation if the animal exposed is not currently vaccinated against rabies.
3. Ferrets are illegal in NYC.
4. Livestock: Horse, mule, donkey, cattle, sheep, goat, and swine (pig).
5. 10-Day Observation: Some of the owner’s home unless otherwise indicated.
6. Contact BCD for guidance on rabies PEP in humans.
7. Wounds of unknown origin must be considered a potential rabies exposure.
8. Small rodents and lagomorphs are deemed low risk for rabies. Encounters with these animals are not considered an exposure to rabies unless there is reason to suspect the animal is rabid. Large rodents such as groundhogs and beavers, as well as opossums (nonaustral), have tested positive for rabies in areas where raccoon rabies is established. Consult with the ABU for encounters with such animals to determine the appropriate course of action.

When handling an animal with a potential rabies exposure, ALWAYS:
- Wear gloves when handling saliva-contaminated wounds or hair.
- Irrigate fresh wounds for 10-15 minutes and disinfected.
- Refer persons with potential rabies exposures to BCD for consultation.

DOHMH CONTACT INFORMATION
BCD = Bureau of Communicable Disease
347-396-2500
ZIVDU = Zoonotic, Influenza and Vector-Borne Disease Unit
347-396-2500
VPHS = Veterinary Public Health Service
646-632-6004
646-632-6074

1. Raccoon Vector Species (RVS): Raccoon, bat, skunk, fox, coyote and mangoo.
2. Suspect rabid animal: Any carnivore that is unavailable for testing or any mammal with illness or behavior consistent with rabies that is unavailable for testing. Exposures to other domestic animals may warrant further investigation if the animal exposed is not currently vaccinated against rabies.
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