



WHAT CAN BE DONE TO PREVENT RABIES?

Every individual pet owner may help to prevent rabies in his community by doing the following:

First of all, have your dog or cat routinely vaccinated. Safe and effective vaccines which give your pet maximum protection against rabies are available from your veterinarian. To ensure continued maximum protection, follow your veterinarian's advice and observe your local rabies control regulations.

Second, obey leash and licensing laws in your community.

Third, report stray dogs to the local animal control authority.

Fourth, do not keep wild animals for pets.

There is no rabies vaccine licensed or proven safe and effective for use in wild animals.

Finally, teach children to avoid strange animals, especially wild animals. This is especially true when you are camping.

AND NOW A NOTE ON YOUR PET'S

GENERAL GOOD HEALTH

Only a healthy pet is a happy companion. To assure your pet's daily well-being requires regular care and close attention to any hint of ill health. The American Veterinary Medical Association therefore suggests that you consult your veterinarian if your pet shows any of the following signs:

- Abnormal behavior, sudden viciousness or lethargy.
- Abnormal discharges from the nose, eyes, or other body openings.
- Abnormal lumps, limping, or difficulty getting up or lying down.
- Loss of appetite, marked weight losses or gains, or excessive water consumption. Difficult, abnormal, or uncontrolled waste elimination.
- Excessive head shaking, scratching, and licking or biting any part of the body.
- Dandruff, loss of hair, open sores, and a ragged or dull coat. Foul breath or excessive tartar deposits on teeth.



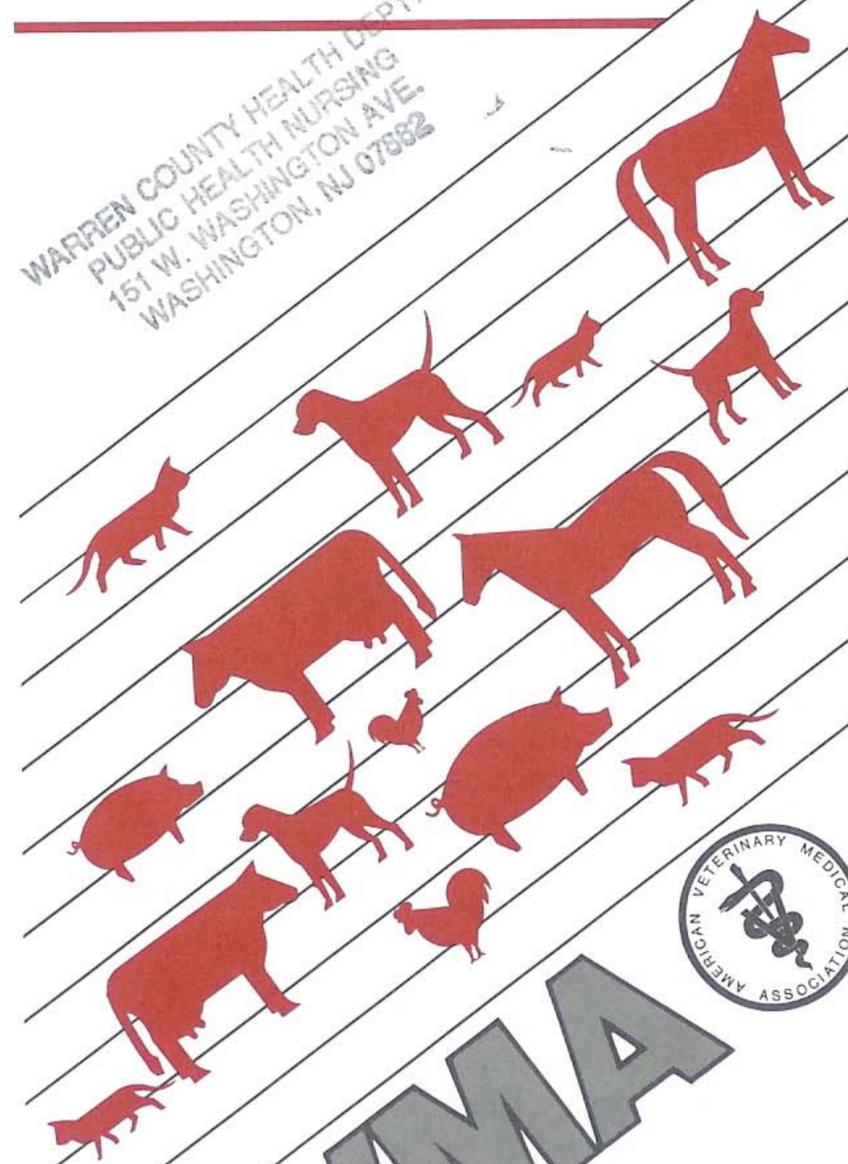
AMERICAN VETERINARY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
930 North Meacham Road, Schaumburg, IL 60196

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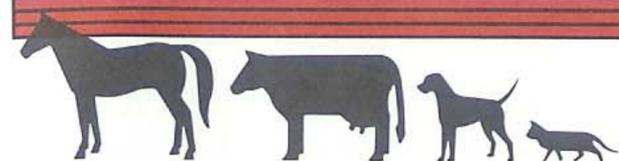
WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT...

RABIES

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AVMA



RABIES

Although today rabies seldom results in human fatalities in the United States, it remains a potentially dangerous public health problem. Each year, more than 20,000 Americans have to undergo anti-rabies treatments as a result of exposure to "rabid" animals. Through conscientious efforts by state and local health agencies, the incidence of rabies continues to decline in domestic animals. Even so, since 1980 more than 6,000 cases of animal rabies are confirmed every year in this country.

All warm-blooded animals can transmit rabies. The majority of the animal rabies cases in the United States are found in wildlife, particularly in skunks, raccoons, foxes, and bats, and in domestic farm animals. Among domestic pets, dogs and cats are the most commonly infected species. Therefore, every pet owner has the responsibility of helping to prevent rabies outbreaks. This responsibility includes cooperating with community-sponsored rabies control programs, understanding the basic signs of rabies, and knowing what to do if bitten by a pet, stray, or wild animal.

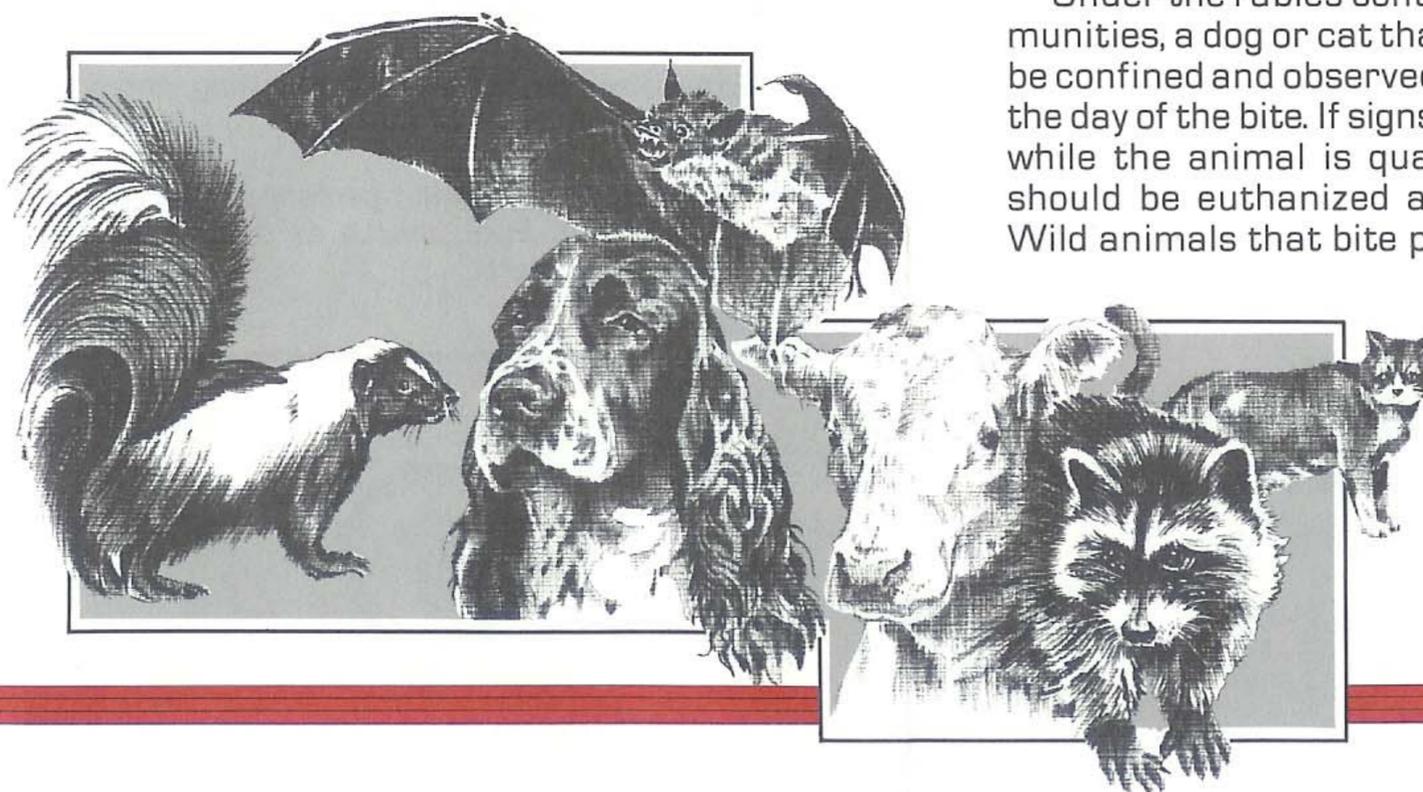
WHAT IS RABIES?

Rabies is a viral disease of man and other animals. The rabies virus attacks the central nervous system and, if the disease is not prevented, causes the death of its victim.

Rabies is usually transmitted from animals to man by a bite from the rabid animal. The wound is contaminated with the virus found in the saliva of the infected animal. Usually, the signs of rabies develop within 2 weeks to 3 months after the bite has been incurred. However, if the bite has been on the head or face and is of a severe nature, signs of the disease may manifest themselves in as few as 10 days. With slight wounds on other parts of the body, the period extending from the time of a bite until clinical signs of rabies occur is longer and has been known — though rarely — to have covered a year or more.

There are two types of clinical rabies in animals — "dumb" and "furious" rabies. Furious rabies in a dog, for example, can be recognized by certain specific signs. At first, the dog infected with the virus will act strangely. There will be a departure from normal habits — either the animal will be unnaturally withdrawn or abnormally affectionate. Following this stage, which lasts about 2 days, the dog usually wanders far afield. And it is then that the most damage is done, for it is during this period of roving that he is "mad." The dog will bite anything in its path, thus infecting people or other animals with the fatal virus. It is also during this period that the dog appears to be frothing at the mouth — the familiar symbol of the "mad" or rabid dog. Actually, this is caused by drooling of the saliva due to difficulty in swallowing. When the roving is over, the animal may come home to die. Returning to his familiar haunts, he finds an isolated place to have his final spasms, lapses into a paralytic state, and dies.

"Dumb" rabies differs in that there is no roving or "mad" period. Paralysis, usually of the lower jaw, is the first recognizable sign. This soon spreads to the limbs and vital organs, resulting in death.



The signs of dumb rabies may be confused with the signs indicating an obstruction in the throat or choke or colic. Such misjudgment can lead to needless human exposure to rabies.

WHAT TO DO IF BITTEN

Anyone who is bitten should immediately wash the wound with soap and large quantities of water and follow a physician's advice. An assessment of the risk of rabies must be made, often with a veterinarian's input.

There are several situations in which anti-rabies treatment is imperative. Obviously, if the bite has come from an animal known to have rabies or having certain suggestive signs, the physician may consider anti-rabies treatment mandatory. Anti-rabies treatment may also be considered essential if the animal causing the injury is unavailable for observation or laboratory testing. If, however, the bite was provoked, or caused by an animal ordinarily not associated with rabies, such as rodents and rabbits, or occurred in an area where rabies is rarely a problem, anti-rabies treatment may not be necessary. High risk individuals should receive pre-exposure vaccinations from their physician.

Under the rabies control laws of most communities, a dog or cat that bites a person must be confined and observed for 10 days following the day of the bite. If signs of the disease appear while the animal is quarantined, the animal should be euthanized and tested for rabies. Wild animals that bite people should be killed

immediately and submitted for a laboratory examination. If positive, anti-rabies treatment is initiated promptly.