

Rabies Program Overview

The Shelby City Health Department follows up on all reported animal bites to ensure the protection of the public from the threat of rabies. The Health Department will ask the owner to quarantine the animal involved in a bite of a human, or will have the animal tested. The Health Department will also ask that the owner have the animal vaccinated against rabies if the animal is not currently vaccinated.

Requirements for quarantine, vaccination, testing, and reporting are stated in Chapter 3701-3 of the Ohio Administrative Code.

Rabies is a fatal disease caused by a virus that attacks the central nervous system. People can contract rabies from the bite of an animal with rabies.

The virus can infect all species of mammals, though it is very rare in small rodents. Wildlife, in particular raccoons, fox, skunks, coyotes, and bats are now the main reservoir for rabies virus in the United States.

Vaccination efforts have greatly reduced the incidence in dogs and other pets, but unvaccinated animals can still get the virus from wildlife, and no vaccine is 100 percent effective.

Rabies Prevention

Animal Owners

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Rabies Prevention

- Avoid Exposure

The first line of defense against rabies is to avoid contact with wild animals, sick or injured animals, and animals you don't know. Pet vaccinations should be kept current, and pets should not be permitted to roam. Food and nesting or hiding places for wild animals should be eliminated from residential areas. Bats should be excluded from houses. Houses should be made bat-proof by sealing entrances used by bats.

- Pre-Exposure immunization

Human rabies immunizations are effective in preventing human rabies. Pre-exposure rabies immunizations can be used for people working with wildlife or other animals on a frequent basis.

- Possible Exposure

Rabies is a preventable viral disease that is transmitted through contact with the saliva of an infected animal. People are exposed to rabies when they are bitten by an infected animal, or less commonly, when the saliva from an infected animal gets into an open wound or onto a mucous membrane. Any bite wound should be thoroughly washed with soap and water as soon as possible. Animal bite victims should consult with their doctor and promptly report the incident to the Shelby City Health Department (419-342-5226).

- Exposure Confirmed

Rabies is almost always fatal once clinical symptoms appear. To confirm the victim's risk of being exposed to rabies, the health department will either test or quarantine the biting animal. If exposure is confirmed, treatment must be initiated soon after the exposure to be effective.

A series of post-exposure rabies immunizations can be given to animal bite victims when the biting animal cannot be quarantined or tested.

- Signs and Symptoms of rabies

Symptoms of rabies in humans include pain or numbness at the site of the bite, fever, sore throat, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, and lethargy. In some individuals, early nervous system involvement may be indicated by the presence of apprehension, anxiety, agitation, nervousness, insomnia, or depression. Symptoms rapidly progress, usually in a matter of days, to include paralysis, spasms of the throat, delirium, hallucinations, coma, cardiac arrhythmia, and finally death. In humans it can take as little as 9 days or as long as 1 year for the symptoms of rabies to appear. Most people who get rabies develop symptoms within 60 days of being exposed.

Symptoms of rabies in animals will not always display itself in drooling and foaming at the mouth. Most animals will display these symptoms only during the latter stages of infection, and sometimes not even then. A better way to identify animals that pose a risk is to recognize unusual or abnormal behavior. Rabid animals, wild or domestic, may stagger, appear restless, be aggressive, change the tone of their barks or growls, or appear to be choking. Wild animals sometimes lose their fear of humans and act friendly.

Animals that usually are active at night may become more active during the day. Passive animals sometimes become fierce and aggressive.

Animal Owners

- What to do if your pet bites someone

Report the incident to the Shelby City Health Department at 419-342-5226. You are required to quarantine your animal for at least 10 days from the day of the bite. Keep your pet isolated and enclosed in a restricted area during the quarantine. If the animal becomes ill, dies, or is lost report it to the Health Department immediately. If your pet is not current on its rabies vaccinations the animal must be vaccinated before it can be removed from quarantine, but after the Health Department examines the animal.

- How can you prevent rabies in my pet?

There are several things you can do to protect your pet from rabies.

First, visit your veterinarian with your pet on a regular basis and keep rabies vaccinations up-to-date for all cats, ferrets, and dogs.

Second, maintain control of your pets by keeping cats and ferrets indoors and keeping dogs under direct supervision.

Third, spay or neuter your pets to help reduce the number of unwanted pets that may not be properly cared for or vaccinated regularly.

Finally, call animal control to remove all stray animals from your neighborhood since these animals may be unvaccinated or ill.

- The importance of vaccinating your pet

Although the majority of rabies cases occur in wildlife, most humans are given rabies vaccine as a result of exposure to domestic animals. This explains the tremendous cost of rabies prevention in domestic animals in the United States.

While wildlife are more likely to be rabid than are domestic animals in the United States, the amount of human contact with domestic animals greatly exceeds the amount of contact with wildlife.

Your pets and other domestic animals can be infected when they are bitten by rabid wild animals. When "spillover" rabies occurs in domestic animals, the risk to humans is increased.

Keep your pets vaccinated by your veterinarian to prevent them from acquiring the disease from wildlife, and thereby transmitting it to humans.

Animal bites

(What to do if you are bitten by an animal)

If a person has been involved in a possible rabies exposure the following should be completed:

1. Gently wash the bite area with soap and water.
2. Consult a Physician immediately. Tetanus shots should be considered if the person has not been immunized within 10 years.
3. Report the incident to the Shelby City Health Department (if the bite took place within the city limits) at 419-342-5226.
4. The owner must quarantine the animal for 10 days and until it is examined by the health department. When the animal is a wild animal, the health department can have it tested for rabies, if it has been captured.
5. After the animal has completed the quarantine period or the animal has been tested for rabies, it can be determined if the person could have been exposed to rabies from the animal and if post-exposure treatment is necessary.

A person is exposed to rabies when they are bitten by an infected animal, or less commonly, when saliva from an infected animal gets into an open wound or onto a mucous membrane.

Free Rabies Clinic

All cats, dogs and ferrets should be vaccinated against rabies.

To encourage the immunization of dogs and cats, Dr. Henry Akers, Dr. Jody Akers, and Dr. Laurie Hickox conduct a **FREE rabies immunization clinic** every year in early May. The last several years the clinic has been held at the Premier Office Complex, 1456 Park Ave West, Mansfield, between noon and 2 pm.

For more information you can call the Shelby City Health Department at 419-342-5226. Typically, flyers are distributed through local business and schools.

Laws and Regulations

- Ohio Revised Code 955.261
- Ohio Administrative Code 1501:3-3-08
- Ohio Administrative Code 1501:41-9-10
- Ohio Administrative Code 1501:41-3-34
- Ohio Administrative Code 901:1-21-02
- Ohio Administrative Code 901:1-17-05

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Laws and Regulations

- Ohio Revised Code 955.261
<http://codes.ohio.gov/orc/955.261>
- Ohio Administrative Code 3701-3-28, 29, and 30
<http://codes.ohio.gov/oac/3701-3-28>
<http://codes.ohio.gov/oac/3701-3-29>
<http://codes.ohio.gov/oac/3701-3-30>
- Ohio Administrative Code 1501:3-3-08
<http://codes.ohio.gov/oac/1501%3A3-3-08>
- Ohio Administrative Code 1501:41-9-10
<http://codes.ohio.gov/oac/1501%3A41-9-10>
- Ohio Administrative Code 1501:41-3-34
<http://codes.ohio.gov/oac/1501%3A41-3-34>
- Ohio Administrative Code 901:1-21-02
<http://codes.ohio.gov/oac/901%3A1-21-02>
- Ohio Administrative Code 901:1-17-05
<http://codes.ohio.gov/oac/901%3A1-17-05>

Links

- Ohio Department of Health

<http://www.odh.ohio.gov/odhPrograms/dis/zoonoses/rabies/rab1.aspx>

- Center for Disease Control and Prevention

<http://www.cdc.gov/rabies/>