



## Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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CONTACT: Courtney Grossman, 330-627-4866 ext. 1562  
Carroll County General Health District

### **Carroll County General Health District to Increase Rabies Surveillance**

The Carroll County General Health District (CCGHD) was notified by the Ohio Department of Health on April 27th that three raccoons and one cat were found to have rabies in Mahoning County, by testing positive for raccoon rabies variant (RRV). The raccoon rabies variant is found in raccoons but can also be passed to humans and other mammals. As a result of the identified cases of rabies, one person was exposed to rabies and received treatment. The Carroll County General Health District is asking residents to help with rabies surveillance in Carroll County.

What is Rabies Surveillance? – increasing testing to look for the presence of racoon strain rabies in our county. How can residents help? The Carroll County General Health District is requesting residents to call us if you find a recently dead racoon, skunk, fox. The Carroll County General Health District can retrieve the animal and send it to the United States Department of Agriculture – Wildlife Services for rabies testing.

Some symptoms of rabies in animals include poor coordination, weakness, excessive salivation, abnormal behavior, aggression, and self-mutilation. However, the only way to confirm that an animal has rabies is through laboratory testing of the animal's brain, so the animal must be dead for testing to be conducted.

If you are bitten or scratched by a raccoon, bat, fox, or skunk wash any wounds immediately. One of the most effective ways to decrease the chance for infection is to wash the wound thoroughly with soap and water. Call your doctor and the CCGHD as soon as possible if exposed. The doctor may recommend that you get a series of shots commonly known as "rabies post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP)." " Rabies is transmitted through the saliva of an infected animal during a bite or scratch. Rabies is a fatal disease if contracted. The rabies virus travels through the nerves until it eventually gets to your brain. It is virtually undetectable by symptoms while in the nervous system. Once it infects the brain and symptoms occur, it is too late for treatment. This is why rabies vaccination for your pets is so important to human health and why immediate treatment following an exposure with a wild animal can save lives." Says Kelly Morris, Health Commissioner.

If your pet fought with a wild animal listed above, call your veterinarian and the CCGHD to report the incident; your animal may need to get a rabies vaccine and be quarantined for a length of time. Prevention is key as rabies is rare in properly vaccinated animals. Please refer to your veterinarian for rabies vaccine requirements for your pet, dogs, cats, and ferrets.

If you have any questions about rabies testing or if you find a newly deceased raccoon, skunk, or fox, please call the Carroll County General Health District at 330-627-4866 ext. 1562