

ANIMAL BITES AND RABIES VACCINE CLINIC

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All animal bites to humans should be treated as potential rabies exposures. The rabies virus is a life-threatening disease which must be treated in the patient very early to the exposure. Ohio law requires anyone who has been bitten by an animal or has the knowledge of a person who has been bitten by an animal to report the bite to the local health department within the jurisdiction in which the bite occurred within 24-hours. The Meigs County Health Department receives on an average of 50 to 70 reports per year. Almost all incidents resulted in the issuance of the mandatory 10-day quarantine period of the animal for observation and no rabies vaccinations for the person exposed. Several kinds of animals have the potential to expose humans to the deadly virus through their saliva or mucus. These animals may include dogs, cats, raccoons, bats, skunks, livestock, or other wild animals. Birds and reptiles do not transmit rabies. Small rodents, squirrels, chipmunks, and rabbits very rarely transmit rabies and are not generally reported. In Ohio the rabies virus is seen primarily in raccoons, skunks and bats. A bite from a rabid raccoon or skunk is more likely to occur to your pets and livestock. Any human exposure to bats should be regarded as a potential exposure to rabies. Any bat found inside your home should be collected and sent for rabies testing.

When making a bite report, be prepared to provide the local health department with a description of the biting animal, owner of the animal, person exposed, location of where the bite happened, rabies vaccination status of the animal (if known) and how the bite occurred. A Registered Environmental Health Specialist from the health department will immediately begin the rabies risk assessment by contacting the person bitten and the owner of the animal or work with a wildlife officer or the animal control officer to capture the animal. The recommended 10-day confinement period is based on if a dog, cat or other animal had the rabies virus in its saliva at the time of a bite, it will begin to show signs of rabies within four or five days. Although a currently rabies vaccinated dog or cat is less likely to contract rabies than an unvaccinated one, vaccine failures have been known to occur and currently vaccinated pets have developed rabies. For this reason, it is important that all dogs, cats or ferrets that bite humans be confined and observed for ten days regardless of vaccination status. If the biting animal dies for any reason during the 10-day confinement and observation period it must be tested for rabies. Maintain the specimen's head for testing purposes. Make sure the head is stored at a cold temperature, but is not frozen. Wild animals are generally euthanized and sent for testing.

If your dog or cat is not vaccinated for rabies or requires a booster, the Meigs County Health Department has partnered with the Meigs County Veterinary Office's Dr. John Krawsczyn and Dr. Kelly Grueser to conduct a rabies vaccination clinic on Sat., June 1st, 2024. The time of the clinic will be from 1pm to 2pm at the Meigs County Health Department at 112 East Memorial Drive in Pomeroy. Vaccines will cost \$5 each. All cats and dogs must be at least 13 weeks of age to receive a rabies vaccine. Out of county dogs and cats are also welcome!

****The Meigs County Health Department does NOT carry or administer the Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) rabies vaccines.** If you have been bitten by an animal, please report to your doctor or the

emergency department for treatment ASAP. If you visit the Holzer-Meigs Emergency Room for treatment, the first vaccine can be administered there, and arrangements can be made with the Holzer Urgent Care to schedule the other vaccines to complete the PEP regimen. The PEP vaccines are not required but are strongly recommended, especially if the animal cannot be quarantined for the 10-day observation period.**