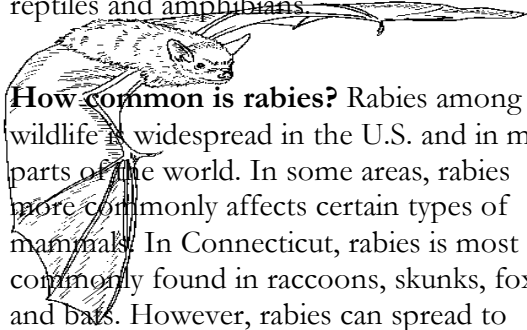


**What is rabies?** Rabies is a deadly, incurable disease caused by a virus that can infect all warm-blooded animals, including humans. The virus cannot infect birds, fish, reptiles and amphibians.



**How common is rabies?** Rabies among wildlife is widespread in the U.S. and in most parts of the world. In some areas, rabies more commonly affects certain types of mammals. In Connecticut, rabies is most commonly found in raccoons, skunks, foxes, and bats. However, rabies can spread to other mammals at any time.

**How do humans become infected with the rabies virus?** The rabies virus lives in the saliva, or other potentially infectious material such as neural tissue of an infected animal. It is transmitted only through a bite, scratch, or by introducing infected saliva into an open wound, or into the eye or mouth.

**What are symptoms of rabies?** In animals, symptoms include a sudden change in expected behavior, such as becoming shy, sluggish, confused or depressed. Animals may become excitable, irritable and aggressive, and may lose all caution for natural enemies. Other signs of rabies include staggering, weakness, paralysis, inability to eat or drink, drooling, frothing at the mouth, convulsions, and a change in the sound of the animals voice.

**Can my cat or dog become ill from rabies?** Cats and dogs are susceptible to

rabies through the bite of an infected animal. Vaccinating dogs and cats is the best way to protect them from rabies infection.

**What is current Connecticut law with regards to vaccinating my dog or cat against rabies virus?** Dogs and cats over 3 months of age must have proof of current rabies vaccination. Dog owners are required to show proof of rabies vaccination in order to license their pet. The Connecticut State Veterinary Office also strongly recommends that pet ferrets receive rabies vaccine.

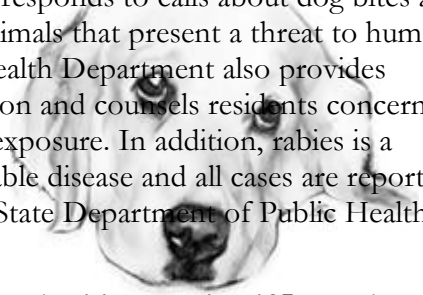
**What do I do if my pet has bitten someone?** Give them your name and the vaccination status of your pet. Tell the person to seek medical attention immediately. Report the bite to the local animal control officer at 385-4068. Confine the pet during a recommended observation period (usually 14+ days), and report any illness or unusual behavior to your veterinarian and local health authority. **Do not destroy the animal unless you have been instructed to do so.** After the recommended observation period, have pet vaccinated for rabies if vaccination is not current.

**Am I at risk of contracting rabies?** Although rabies in humans is very rare, about 18,000 people with animal bites receive preventive rabies treatment each year. Rabies in humans can be prevented either by eliminating exposure to rabid animals, or by providing exposed persons with prompt local treatment of wounds

combined with the administration of immune globulin and rabies vaccine.

**If a dog or cat, or a wild animal bites me, what should I do?** Do not panic! Wash the wound thoroughly with warm, soapy water and call your physician who will determine if you need rabies shots. If the animal is a pet, get the owner's name, address, and ask for proof of rabies vaccination. Report the bite to the animal control authority. If the animal is wild, confine it only if possible without having direct contact with the animal. Do not destroy the head of the animal since brain tissue may need to be tested.

**What is Stratford doing to address concerns about rabies?** Stratford has ongoing rabies clinics for cats and dogs in the spring. The Town's animal control officer responds to calls about dog bites and wild animals that present a threat to humans. The Health Department also provides education and counsels residents concerned about exposure. In addition, rabies is a reportable disease and all cases are reported to the State Department of Public Health.



**Do I need rabies vaccine if I travel to areas where rabies is common?**

International travelers who are likely to come in contact with animals in areas where rabies is present and who lack immediate access to appropriate medical care should be considered for pre-exposure rabies prophylaxis. Contact your local hospital or travel vaccine clinic for more information.

**Who else should receive pre-exposure rabies prophylaxis?** Pre-exposure prophylaxis is recommended for persons in high-risk groups, such as veterinarians, animal handlers, and certain laboratory workers and persons whose activities bring them into frequent contact with potentially rabid bats, raccoons, skunks, cats, dogs, etc. Pre-exposure rabies vaccine can be obtained through your physician's office.

**What You Can Do to Protect  
Yourself & Your Family  
From Rabies**

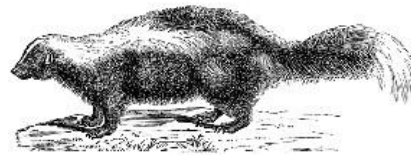
**\*Have your dogs and cats vaccinated.** See your veterinarian about rabies vaccines and required boosters for your pets. There also may be low cost rabies clinics in your area. Call the Town Clerk's Office at 385-4020 for more info.

**\*Keep pets indoors or closely supervised while out of doors.** NEVER allow your pets to roam freely. While you may trust your pet to not wander, other animals can wander into your yard!

**\*Never feed pets outdoors.** Keep the area around your home free of food scraps that may attract wild animals. Secure trash stored outdoors. Secure doors, windows, cap chimneys and close off any openings in porches, basements, and attics.

**\*Stay away from stray animals** and report stray dogs or cats to the animal control officer. NEVER feed or approach stray or wild animals!

**\*Respond immediately to any bite or attack suffered by your pet.** Call the local animal control officer and your veterinarian for instructions.



**Vaccinate your cats and dogs and  
encourage others to do so.  
Play your part in effective rabies control!**

**For more information, call the Stratford  
Health Department at (203) 385-4090  
or visit their website at  
<http://www.townofstratford.com/health>**

**Recommended website:**  
<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/rabies>

# Rabies

## Frequently Asked Questions



**Stratford Health Department  
468 Birdseye Street  
Stratford, CT 06615  
Tel: 385-4090 Fax: 381-2048**

**Monday - Friday  
8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.**

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