



Municipality of Princeton

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Raccoon Tested Positive for Rabies

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT:

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PRINCETON, NJ – On July 27th, a raccoon in the area of 470 Quaker Road along a walking trail connected to the Institute for Advanced Study trail system, tested positive for rabies. A resident observed the raccoon was acting strangely and Animal Control was alerted of the incident, took possession of the raccoon, and submitted it for testing at the New Jersey Public Health & Environmental Laboratory. The test results were positive. No known human or pet exposures occurred.

Rabies is a fatal viral disease that can be prevented by avoiding contact with animals that may be rabid. If a person has significant exposure, getting vaccinated right away can also prevent disease. Rabies can be spread from the bite of a rabid animal, or when the animal's saliva contacts a person's mouth, eyes or an open sore.

Rabies poses a real threat, especially to unvaccinated domestic animals. This incident should serve as a reminder for pet owners to ensure their animals are up-to-date with rabies vaccination. Rabies occurs throughout New Jersey, including Princeton. Bats are the animal most commonly found to have rabies. Skunks, foxes, raccoons and unvaccinated domestic animals can also develop rabies. In Princeton, approximately 6 animals per year have tested positive for rabies. Human rabies cases in the United States are rare. This fox is the second animal in Princeton to test positive for rabies in 2021.

Behavioral signs of rabid animals, wild or domestic, may include staggering, restlessness, aggression, a change of the tone of their barks or growls, or choking. Passive animals sometimes become fierce and aggressive. Nocturnal animals sometimes appear during the day.

If you or a loved one are bitten or scratched by an unfamiliar animal, or an animal suspected of having rabies, immediately wash the wound thoroughly with soap and water and then seek medical attention. Ask your medical provider to report and coordinate with the Princeton Health Department. Not all exposures require post exposure treatment. Health Department and Animal Control staff will work to

locate, capture, and test suspect animals in an effort to definitively identify if the animal is infectious. Reporting bites is a legal obligation of exposed individuals and medical professionals to assure any/all actions are taken to protect the individuals involved and the public at large.

Take these steps to protect your family and pets from rabies:

- Make sure your pets and domestic animals are up-to-date on their rabies vaccinations;
- Keep children and pets from approaching or touching wild or strange animals.
- Make sure that any openings to your home such as crawl spaces, chimneys, attics, porches or garages are sealed or covered with thick wire screen to prevent entry by wild animals.
- Discourage wild animal foraging by not leaving pet food outside and by securing garbage cans.
- Avoid feeding, touching, or housing stray or wild animals.
- **If you see a wild animal (i.e. fox, skunk, raccoon), that is sick, injured, orphaned or behaving oddly, leave it alone and contact Princeton Animal Control. Do NOT handle the animal yourself.**
 - Animal Control Daytime Number (M-F – 8:30-4:30) – (609) 924-2728
 - Nights & Weekends – Call Police Non-Emergency – (609) 921-2100

For additional information on rabies, please visit:

<https://nj-princeton.civicplus.com/168/Animal-Control>

<http://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/topics/rabies.shtml>