

# Rabies is a deadly disease that infects people as well as animals

Rabies can be prevented, but once signs of infection occur, there is no cure.

For several years, rabies has been found in several species of wild animals in Howard County. Additionally, several cats have also tested positive for the rabies virus. Large numbers of raccoons with rabies have been found throughout Maryland.

## Common sense is the best prevention

- Keep rabies shots up to date for all dogs, cats and ferrets. Dogs and cats must also be licensed.
- Protect your pets from contact with wild animals by keeping them fenced or on a leash.
- Feed pets inside.

- Keep garbage secure from all animals, either in tamper-proof containers, a closed garage or a screened enclosure with a latched gate.
- Cap chimneys with wire screen.
- Seal openings under porches and in attics, basements or outbuildings.

## Stay away from stray & wild animals

- DO NOT attempt to touch a stray animal even if it seems to be tame and friendly. It could be sick. Call the Howard County Animal Control Facility at (410) 313-2780.
- DO NOT approach wild animals. They may attack if threatened.
- DO NOT coax a wild animal closer to you even if it seems tame and

friendly. The young of some animals may be infected with the virus before birth, even if born in captivity.

- If you see a wild animal in a residential area, you should be concerned if it appears to be injured or critically ill. CALL the Animal Control Facility.
- DO NOT touch dead animals. Call the Animal Control Facility.

*(over for more info...)*



## If you are bitten or scratched by an animal...

- Wash the bite with soap and water.
- Consult your family doctor immediately; medical treatment may be necessary.
- Report all animal bites to the Howard County Health Department: (410) 313-1773 (weekdays) or (410) 313-2929 (evenings & weekends).
- If the animal is a pet, try to get the owner's name and address and ask for vaccination information.
- If the animal is running loose, call the Howard County Animal Control Facility: (410) 313-2780.

## If your pet is attacked by an animal...

- DO NOT touch your pet for at least two hours unless it is seriously injured. The other animal's saliva might be on your pet's fur. If the rabies virus is in the saliva, you could be exposed by touching your pet.
- If your pet is severely injured and you must provide care, wear gloves or cover your hands with plastic. Wash your hands with large amounts of soap and water after touching your pet.

- Call the Howard County Health Department to report the attack.

## Call for help...

- To report animal bites: (410) 313-1773 (weekdays 8 am - 5 pm) (410) 313-2929 (evenings, weekends and holidays).
- To report a stray, trapped or dead animal: (410) 313-2780.
- For help with domestic animals, or violations of animal control laws: (410) 313-2780.
- TDD: (410) 313-2323.

### *Rabies vaccination is the best prevention*

Domestic animals need to be protected against rabies. Dogs and cats should receive one shot as early as three months of age and another shot one year later. These two doses constitute the "primary vaccination." Follow-up shots should be given at three-year intervals. Ferrets can be vaccinated at three months and annually thereafter.

There is no vaccine available for caged rodents such as mice, gerbils and guinea pigs that are kept as pets. Although these rodents almost never get rabies, a bite from one of these animals should be reported and the animal quarantined for observation.

Even though it is not the law, the Health Department recommends that livestock also be vaccinated. Consult your veterinarian for more information about the procedure.

