

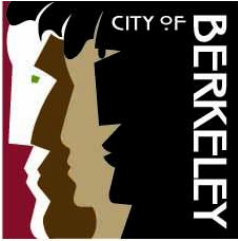
Health, Housing & Community
Services Department
Environmental Health Division

RABIES FACTS AND PROTECTIVE MEASURES

What we know about rabies:

- Rabies is found in most counties in California including Alameda County. Alameda County has been declared a "Rabies Area" since 1958.
- Rabies is a deadly virus disease which affects the nervous system. Once symptoms start in an infected human being it is almost uniformly fatal. There is **NO KNOWN CURE**.
- Rabies is transmitted in the saliva of infected warm blooded animals (mammals) through mucous membranes or any break in the skin by biting, licking or scratching.
- Rabies symptoms in humans usually occur 4 to 6 weeks after exposure but can range from 5 days to 7 years.
- Typical symptoms include a sense of apprehension, headache, fever and malaise. The disease progresses to paralysis, spasm of the muscles used for swallowing (leading to fear of water, or hydrophobia), confusion, convulsions and eventually death.
- Animals at highest risk for carrying rabies in California are skunks and bats. Foxes, feral cats, and raccoons are also at high risk for carrying rabies. Rabies has been found occasionally in other California wildlife such as opossum and coyote, and in unvaccinated dogs. Rodents (gophers, mice, hamsters, squirrels, rats, opossums, guinea pigs) and rabbits are considered very low risk for rabies.
- The degree of risk to humans and pets for rabies is determined by the species of the animal and the circumstances. There is no risk for rabies from reptiles, birds, or insects.
- If a wild animal such as a skunk, bat, raccoon, or grey fox which is normally nocturnal (active at night) is seen in the daylight acting in a strange manner, do not touch or approach the animal. The animal may be tested for rabies by the State Health Laboratory. Example of animals to be tested:
 1. A skunk roaming or staggering in daylight.
 2. A bat hanging on a window screen or sill.
 3. A grey fox acting in an aggressive manner in the daytime.

Immediately call the City of Berkeley Animal Control Services at (510) 981-6600 if you observe animals acting in a strange, unusual manner.



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The following are protective measures that are necessary to prevent rabies in humans and domestic animals:

1. Have dog(s) and cat(s) vaccinated against rabies. Vaccination and Licensing is required for all dogs 4 months of age and older. Dogs which are first vaccinated at one year of age or less must be revaccinated one year later. The interval for revaccination is three (3) years for older dogs.
2. Confine dogs to property especially puppies less than four (4) months of age since they are not protected against rabies. Otherwise, if a dog is taken off the premises it must be on a leash.
3. Report any animal bites of humans or any close contact between dogs or cats with skunks or bats or other wild animals to the City of Berkeley Animal Control Services.
4. Avoid wild animals or domestic animals which are strays or which run loose. Do not feed wild animals by hand. It is dangerous to attempt to feed, pet, or care for sick or injured animals.
5. Do not attract skunks or raccoons with food! They will eat garbage, fruit, vegetables, and especially dog and cat food. Pet food left outside is a strong invitation to wildlife. Keep garbage cans covered with tight fitting lids.
6. Do not provide shelter for skunks and other wild animals. Close all openings under your home and other buildings. Keep foundation vent screens in good repair. Eliminate piles of trash, rocks, wood, hollow logs, heavy growth of vegetation and other possible hiding places.
7. Do not provide shelter for bats. Close, seal, or screen all openings so there is none greater than 1/4" in size especially at roof level. Install 1/4" screen on attic vents and maintain in good repair.

If you require information regarding wild animals such as bats or skunks, please call the City of Berkeley Animal Shelter at (510) 981-6600, Monday through Sunday or Vector Control Services at 510-981-5310, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.