

Raccoon Rabies Epizootic and TVR (trap, vaccinate, release) in Manhattan

The Health Department began the second round of vaccinating raccoons in and around Central Park to protect them and the surrounding community from rabies. Since December of 2009, health authorities have documented more than 130 rabies cases among raccoons in Central Park and Upper Manhattan. The vaccination effort – a collaboration involving the Health Department, the Parks Department, the Central Park Conservancy and the US Department of Agriculture – is an attempt to contain the outbreak. The first round of vaccinations were conducted from February 16th to April 9th of 2010 and this second round will run from September 20th to November 15th of this year. To vaccinate the raccoons, wildlife experts humanely trap raccoons around Central Park, Morningside Park and Riverside Park. Each captured animal is vaccinated against rabies and tagged for identification, then released in the same location. Traps are placed in remote areas to keep pets and park visitors from disrupting them, and each trap displays City contact information for use in emergencies.

During the first round 237 raccoons were vaccinated, resulting in a dramatic decrease in the number of rabid raccoons. This second round is to vaccinate raccoons born this spring.

Rabies is seen more in raccoons than any other animal in New York City. Besides preventing transmission among raccoons, the vaccination effort will reduce the chance that a rabid raccoon bites or scratches a pet or person. Such occurrences are rare in the city.

So far this year, 123 raccoons in Manhattan tested positive for rabies, most of which were identified earlier in the year. The Health Department's rabies surveillance reports are available [online](#) and updated regularly.

To protect yourself against rabies:

- Do not touch or feed wild animals, or stray dogs or cats.
- Keep garbage in tightly sealed containers.
- Stay away from any animal that is behaving aggressively
- Stay away from any wild animal that appears ill or acts unusually friendly. Call 311 or your local police precinct to report the animal.
- Animals that have attacked, or seem likely to attack, should be reported to 911.

To protect your pet against rabies:

- Make sure your dog or cat is up-to-date on rabies vaccinations.
- Keep your dog leashed while outdoors unless at a specified off-leash area or park
- Do not leave your pets outdoors unattended.
- Do not try to separate animals that are fighting.
- If your pet has been in contact with an animal that might be rabid, contact your veterinarian, and report the incident to 311.
- Feed pets indoors.

If you are bitten or scratched by an animal:

- Immediately wash the wound with lots of soap and water.
- Seek medical care from your health care provider.
- If the animal is not owned, and can be captured, call 311.

- If the animal is a pet, get the owner's name, address and telephone number so that the Health Department can monitor the animal.
- To report a bite, call the Animal Bite Unit (212-676-2483) between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. during the week. At night or on weekends, call 212-POISONS (764-7667). You can also file a report online at www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/vet/vetegp.shtml.
- For information about medical follow-up, call 311 or your medical provider.

For more information about rabies in New York City, visit www.nyc.gov/health/rabies.

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