

The Health Department noted a recent case of rabies in a raccoon in the city/town of Rutland. Please take steps to protect humans and pets from rabies.

If you are bitten by an animal: wash the wound very well with soap and water and contact your health care provider. Follow all their instructions.

If your pet or farm animal was exposed to a wild or stray animal that might have rabies: contact your veterinarian. Pets should be vaccinated for rabies. State law requires dogs and cats to be vaccinated — even barn cats.

If you see a wild or stray animal acting strangely, or are concerned about a rabies exposure, call the Rabies Hotline (1-800-4-RABIES) or report it to your town's animal control officer.

Do not touch or pick up wild or stray animals – even baby animals – or try to make them into pets. Doing so can put yourself or your family at risk of exposure through a bite or a scratch. You can't tell if an animal has rabies just by looking at it. Interacting with young wildlife may result in them being orphaned or, if tested for rabies, requires humanely euthanizing the animal. So, for their own sake, leave wildlife in the wild.

Learn more about rabies in Vermont – visit www.healthvermont.gov/rabies.

Rabies is a deadly viral disease of the brain that infects mammals and is fatal to both humans and animals. In Vermont, rabies is most commonly found in wild animals such as raccoons, skunks, foxes, bats and woodchucks. Cats, dogs and livestock can also get rabies if they have not been vaccinated. Rabies virus is spread through the bite of an infected animal. Rabies is transmitted only when the virus is introduced into a bite wound, open cuts on the skin, or onto mucous membranes like the mouth or eyes.