

RABIES FACTS AND PROTECTIVE MEASURES

- 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 viral disease which is transmitted in the saliva of infected warm-blooded animals (mammals) through any break in the skin by biting or licking.
- Rabies affects the nervous system. Once signs of the illness start in the infected human it is virtually fatal and there is no cure. However, with proper treatment before symptoms appear the disease can be prevented.
- Animals at medium to high risk for carrying rabies are, bats, skunks, foxes, coyotes, opossums, badgers, weasels and raccoons, dogs and cats which have not been vaccinated against rabies. Rodents (gophers, mice, hamsters, squirrels, rats and 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 biting animals and the circumstances of the bite. There is no risk for rabies from reptiles, birds or insects.
- If a wild animal, such as a bat, skunk or gray fox which generally is nocturnal (active at night) is seen in the daylight acting in a strange manner, it may be tested for rabies by the Alameda County Public Health Laboratory. Examples of animals to be tested.
 1. A bat hanging on the widow screen or sill.
 2. A skunk roaming or staggering in the daylight.
 3. A gray fox acting in an aggressive manner in the daytime.
- Call your local Animal Control Services to pick up the strange acting animals for testing.
- 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, and keep them up-to-date. State Law requires vaccination and licensing for all dogs four month of age and older. The City of Alameda requires cats also to be vaccinated and licensed.

Animals, which are first vaccinated, must be revaccinated one year later. The interval for revaccination after the second vaccination is three years.

2. Confine dogs to property, especially puppies less than four months of age since they are not protecting against rabies. Otherwise, if it is dog is taken off the property it must be on a leash.
3. Report any animal bites of humans or any close contact between dogs and cats, with bats or skunks or other wild animals to local Animal Control Services.
4. Avoid wild animals or domestic animals which are strays or running 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 with food! They will eat garbage, fruit, vegetables and especially dog and cat food. Pet food left outside is a strong invitation to skunks and other animals. There is an ample food supply in nature for these animals, such as insects, rodents, bird eggs, etc.
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, thick vegetation and other possible hiding, or nesting places.
7. Do not provide shelter for bats. Close, seal or screen all openings so there is none greater than ¼ inch size, especially at roof level. Install ¼ inch screen on attic vents and maintain in good repair.

For further information, call Alameda County Vector Control Services District at (510) 567-6800.