



Jefferson County PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

Public Health Facility, 531 Meade Street, Watertown, New York 13601

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Faith Lustik, Health Planner
(315) 786-3723

Another Skunk Test Positive for Rabies

Watertown, NY January 29, 2016~ The New York State Department of Health laboratory has reported to the Jefferson County Public Health Service(JCPHS) that a skunk in the City of Watertown has tested positive for rabies. A total of six rabid skunks have tested positive for rabies since December 4th. This skunk was located near the previous rabid skunks in the city.

This skunk was killed when a dog was exposed. Unfortunately, the dog was not up to date on rabies vaccination which requires the dog to be either quarantined for 6 months or euthanized. Skunks may typically stay in dens during cold weather but as temperatures increase the skunks will be more active than usual. Rabies is a fatal disease that attacks the brain and spinal cord. It can take several weeks to several months for rabies symptoms to appear. Early treatment after an exposure can prevent rabies in humans and in pets who are up to date on vaccination.

Any mammal can get rabies, but it is most often seen in bats, raccoons, skunks, and foxes. Animals with rabies may be aggressive, sick or unusually friendly. Please take these steps to help prevent the spread of rabies:

1. Teach children to stay away from unfamiliar animals, either wild or domestic, even if they appear friendly. Remind them to tell you if they have any unusual contact with an animal.
2. Do not leave pet food outside as it attracts wildlife to your home.
3. Wash any wound from an animal encounter thoroughly with soap and water and seek medical attention immediately.
4. Be a responsible pet owner by keeping your pet's vaccinations current. Getting your pet vaccinated by your vet or at a clinic can help stop the spread of rabies from wild animals to humans.
5. Monitor your pet when they are outside. If your pet is involved in an altercation with a wild animal, do not get in between them. Do not touch your pet without gloves as rabies is spread through saliva. Cover your pet with a towel and contact your vet as your pet may need a booster shot.

To learn more about rabies, follow us on [Facebook](#) or go to www.icphs.org and click on Rabies Control.

~END~