



## Jefferson County PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

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

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### PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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### **Skunk Test Positive for Rabies**

**Watertown, NY February 10, 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 seven rabid skunks have tested positive for rabies since December 4<sup>th</sup>. This skunk was located on Gill Street near where the other four rabid skunks in the city were found.

This skunk was found to be acting abnormally and was euthanized. There was no human exposure but dogs may have been exposed. The dogs were up to date with their rabies vaccination and only will require a booster shot. 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. A rabies vaccination clinic will be held February 23<sup>rd</sup> 4pm-6pm at the Salvation Army gymnasium at 723 State Street, Watertown. There will also be clinics in March at Jefferson County Dog Control.
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](http://www.icphs.org) and click on Rabies Control.

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