



## Jefferson County PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

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

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### PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Faith Lustik, Health Planner  
(315) 786-3723

### **Three Animals Reported to Have Rabies**

**Watertown, NY June 15, 2016**~ The New York State Department of Health laboratory has reported to the Jefferson County Public Health Service that a skunk and 2 raccoons have tested positive for rabies. This skunk was located at a Belleville-Henderson Central School (BHCS) park after school on June 6th. The skunk was acting aggressively, was dispatched by a Department of Environmental Conservation officer and tested by the USDA. On West Church Street in Adams, a raccoon was dispatched by a DEC officer and tested by the USDA. There are no known contacts with other animals or people in either of these cases. Another raccoon was killed by a family member of a homeowner on Route 177 in Adams Center and tested by the USDA. This raccoon was involved in a fight with a dog. The dog has an up to date rabies vaccination so it only required 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. **The next rabies vaccination clinic will be at Jefferson County Dog Control this Thursday, June 16<sup>th</sup>, 6-8pm.**
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.

JCPHS in partnership with area schools will be providing rabies prevention educational materials to students. It is important for parents to educate children to be careful of wildlife and to report any bites to an adult. To find additional information, follow us on [Facebook](#) or go to [www.icphs.org](http://www.icphs.org)

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