



DAVIDSON COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Protecting, Caring, Serving Our County

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PRESS RELEASE

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DAVIDSON COUNTY REPORTS FIRST CASE OF RABIES IN 2020

For the first time in at least ten years the Davidson County Health Department is reporting a case of rabies in a domestic dog. On June 6, 2020 a Davidson County resident was bitten by a friend's dog in the Reeds Community. The owner reported just prior to the bite the dog had recently displayed unusual aggressive behavior, and contacted animal control. This dog never received a rabies virus vaccine and may have contracted the virus from an encounter with a raccoon that was witnessed by the owners. Davidson County Animal Control transported the dog to the Davidson County Animal Shelter for a 10-day rabies quarantine, where it was quickly determined by the shelter staff that the dog was unwell and a rabies test was needed.

Upon receiving the positive rabies report, staff members of the Davidson County Health Department worked with the dog's owners to determine close contacts and individuals to refer to their physician for medical care. Rabies is 99.9% fatal in humans, exposed individuals should immediately begin treatment with the rabies vaccine postexposure prophylaxis (PEP) to prevent contracting the virus. Rabies is spread through the saliva of an infected animal.

A positive rabies case in our community is a reminder to all pet owners to keep your pets up-to-date on necessary vaccinations. North Carolina law requires that all domestic dogs, cats, and ferrets must be vaccinated against rabies by 4 months of age and kept current.

To protect yourself, family, friends and pets, beware of wild animals, especially those out during the daytime. Stay away from animals you do not know. If your vaccinated pet comes in contact with a wild animal, seek care from a veterinarian as a rabies booster vaccine for your pet may be needed—never touch a dead wild animal with your bare hands.

If you see stray dogs, cats, or wildlife in your neighborhood, call Animal Control at 336-249-0131. If you have questions regarding your own exposure to any animal, please contact your healthcare provider to discuss your situation.

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