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DOH-BAY REMINDS RESIDENTS TO TAKE A BITE OUT OF RABIES ON WORLD RABIES DAY

Bay County has six laboratory confirmed rabid animal for 2018.

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Panama City, Fla.— The Florida Department of Health wants to remind residents to remember rabies can be prevented through vaccination of animals, home protections, and staying away from wildlife and unfamiliar animals. Bay County has six laboratory confirmed rabid animals this year. This includes the most recent case of a raccoon in *The Cove* in mid-September. Rabies is a **fatal** viral infection of the nervous system that is transmitted from **animal to animal or animal to human** by bite, scratch, or mucous membrane exposure to infected saliva.

Florida law requires dogs and cats four months or older be vaccinated by a licensed veterinarian against rabies. Cats are the domestic animal most likely to be infected with rabies. Keep cats indoors.

Protect Your Family Around the Home:

- Keep your pets indoors. When they go outside, keep them in a fenced in yard or on a leash and watch them.
- Keep your pets' food out of reach of stray or wild animals. Secure your garbage cans.
- Remember that although most wild animals are outdoors, bats can sometimes fly into buildings, including your home.

To avoid being bitten:

- Do not approach stray pets or wildlife.
- Do not feed or attempt to pet or handle stray pets or wildlife.
- Do not disturb an animal that is sleeping, eating or caring for its young.
- If a strange animal walks toward you, stay calm and slowly move away.

If you are bitten by a stray or wild animal, call 911.

- Take care of the bite wound:
- Before treating the wound, wash your hands with soap and clean fresh water.
- Remove any item that is in the way of caring for the wound.

- Put pressure on the wound with a clean cloth to stop bleeding.
- After the bleeding has stopped, pour bottled or clean running water over the wound.
- Gently clean around the wound with soap and clean water.
- Pat dry and use an adhesive bandage or dry clean cloth to cover the wound.
- Leave unclean wounds open.

Report the bite to your local animal control agency. Bay County Animal Service can be reached at 850-767-3333. In Lynn Haven, call the Lynn Haven Police Department at 850-265-1112. Tell the animal control official everything you know about the animal and where it went. Also report the injury to the Florida Department of Health in Bay County at 850-872-4455. Follow up. Rabies is preventable when treatment is provided in a timely manner.

For further information on rabies, go to the Florida Department of Health website at <http://www.doh.state.fl.us/environment/medicine/rabies/rabies-index.html> or contact the Florida Department of Health in Bay County at 850-872-4720 or follow us on Twitter @FLHealthEmerald.

About the Florida Department of Health

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