



Rabies & Animal Safety

What is Rabies?

Rabies is a deadly disease caused by a virus. The rabies virus is found in the saliva and brain tissue of rabid animals (animals that have the virus). The rabies virus is not found in the blood, urine, or feces of animals.

Can I Get Rabies?

You could get rabies if a rabid animal bites or scratches you or if its saliva or brain tissue gets in your mouth, eye, or an open cut. To prevent rabies in humans, medical treatment must be started soon after contact with the rabies virus. If it is not treated, rabies is always deadly.

How is Rabies Spread?

Rabies can be spread from animal to animal, or animal to human. Rabies is spread when the saliva or brain tissue of a rabid animal gets in the mouth, the eyes, or an open cut. Rabies is most often spread to animals and humans through a bite from an infected animal.

What Animals Can Get Rabies?

Rabies is carried mainly by wild animals like raccoons, skunks, foxes, and bats. Humans, dogs, and cats can also get rabies. Squirrels, hamsters, guinea pigs, gerbils, chipmunks, rats, mice, and rabbits most often do not get rabies.

Can My Pet Get Rabies?

If your pet did not get its rabies shots, it could get rabies. It is important to keep your pet's rabies shot up-to-date.

What Does a Rabid Animal Look Like?

Rabid animals may act tame. They may also act strange. They may act hostile, may avoid food and water, may foam at the mouth, or have trouble moving. Stay away from any strange or wild animals. Report any stray or strange acting animals to your County Animal Control Office.

IN A POISONING
EMERGENCY, CALL
24-HOURS A DAY,
7 DAYS A WEEK:

1-800-222-1222

Teletype for the
deaf and hearing
Impaired only:
TDD 404-616-9287

What If An Animal Bites Me?

Wash the bite area with warm, soapy water. Next, call the Georgia Poison Center or your doctor right away. They will tell you what to do.



What If Another Animal Bites My Pet?

If another animal bites your pet, call the Georgia Poison Center (GPC), your County Animal Control Office, or your veterinarian right away. They will tell you what to do.

How Can I Protect My Pet From Rabies?

- Keep your pet's rabies shots up-to-date. By Georgia law, dogs, cats, and ferrets must get a rabies shot when they are 3-4 months old and every year after that.
- Call your veterinarian for more details on rabies shots for you pet.
- Keep your pet in your house, in a fenced yard, or on a leash when outdoors.
- Do not allow your pet to wander around, it will be more likely to get rabies.



How Can I Help Protect Myself and My Family From Rabies?

- Make sure your pets get their rabies shots.
- Keep your pets on your property.
- Do not leave garbage or pet food outside. Food left out may attract wild or stray animals.
- Stay away from wild, sick, hurt, or dead animals. Do not pick up or move sick or hurt animals. If you find a wild, sick, or hurt animal, call your County Animal Control Office.
- Do not keep wild animals like raccoons, skunks, foxes, coyotes, and wolves as pets. It is unsafe and also illegal.
- Teach your children not to go near, tease, or play with wild animals or strange dogs and cats.



Certified as a Regional Poison Center by the American Association of Poison Control Centers.

The Georgia Poison Center

Each year, the Georgia Poison Center provides services to thousands of people in Georgia. You can call the GPC to get help in a poisoning emergency or to get treatment advice about animal or insect bites. Nurses, pharmacists, and doctors answer the phones 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. They can tell you what to do if you, your child, or your pet is poisoned or was bitten by an animal. In addition, the GPC staff can answer your questions about poisons in and around your home.

All calls to the GPC are free.

To order educational material, call the Education Department at 404.616.9235 or visit our website at www.georgiapoisoncenter.org

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