



ALLEGHENY COUNTY

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August 2, 2018

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Annual Raccoon Rabies Vaccination Baiting Project Set for August 3-17

PITTSBURGH – As part of the 17th annual raccoon rabies baiting program, employees from the Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Services (WS) will team up to distribute more than 300,000 baits in all 130 municipalities across Allegheny County, and in select parts of Beaver and Washington Counties, starting on August 3 and concluding on August 17.

The baits are designed to attract raccoons and inoculate them with the rabies vaccine. Plastic packets containing vaccine are enclosed in fishmeal-scented blocks to attract raccoons. Baits will be placed in raccoon habitats, reducing the chances of human exposure to the vaccine. The public is asked to keep their pets on leash, indoors or confined to their property as much as possible during the next two weeks. While the baits are not harmful to pets, health officials don't want pets to find and eat the baits, as the baits are meant to be consumed by raccoons.

The Health Department reminds residents to avoid any contact with the bait. If you do touch the intact bait or the liquid vaccine inside, immediately wash your hands and any other exposed area of skin with soap and water. In the unlikely event that a blister-like rash develops, you should contact your health care provider immediately.

To ensure raccoons are hungry and will eat the bait, the Health Department is also asking the public to make a special effort to bring any food indoors that raccoons might eat and to make sure that garbage containers kept outdoors have secure lids.

The number of rabid raccoons has steadily declined over recent years. Efforts to curb rabies in raccoons through programs such as this one, which is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, is part of a multi-state effort to eradicate raccoon rabies. These efforts have significantly reduced the risk of this deadly disease for people and their pets.

Rabies is a virus transmitted by an animal bite or scratch, and exposures due to a bite or scratch are almost always fatal when left untreated. Any individual who is bitten, scratched or otherwise exposed to saliva from a stray or any other animal, should immediately cleanse the contact area with soap and water, seek emergency medical treatment and call the Health Department (412-687-2243) to report the incident.

All residents should always avoid stray animals and wildlife, even if they appear healthy, to avoid exposure to rabies. Residents should also have their pets vaccinated, and watch for unusual behavior. If any animal appears to be acting strange or becomes threatening, residents should notify their local animal control service, the police or the Pennsylvania Game Commission immediately.

For more information on the Raccoon Rabies Vaccination Baiting Project, visit: www.achd.net/raccoon.

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