

## **Appendix: Information for the Public –**

### **How to Prevent Exposure to Rabies**

Contact with wild animals is the primary way that people, domestic animals and livestock are exposed to rabies. Rabies is a deadly disease. Wild mammals and strays can transmit rabies even if they don't appear sick. By avoiding contact with wild or stray animals and by taking simple precautions, you can greatly reduce the chances of you, your family or your domestic animals being exposed to rabies and of having to undergo medical treatment.

#### **Practice the following precautions to prevent rabies exposures and to live safely with wildlife:**

- Do not feed pets outdoors.
- Keep dogs, cats and ferrets and livestock currently vaccinated against rabies.
- Supervise pets while they are outside. A fenced yard is the best protection.
- Do not approach, feed or handle wildlife; leave orphan wildlife alone.
- If you see a wild animal or stray pet around your home that appears sick or unusual, or if you find a bat inside your home, call your local animal control in your county for assistance.
  
- If wildlife are damaging your property or are a threat to your health, call a wildlife control agent (WCA) for safe removal (see <https://www.ncwildlife.org/Trapping/Wildlife-Control-Agent>)
- Do not attract wildlife to your yard and do not feed wildlife.
- Remember, birdfeeders will attract squirrels, foxes and other mammals.
- Secure garbage, and remember that composting also attracts wildlife.
- Keep yard mowed, shrubs trimmed and clear fallen trees and debris from your yard.
- Repair holes in siding and screens, and place caps on chimneys and screens on attic vents to prevent wildlife such as raccoons and bats from entering.
- Be aware that any new construction on your home may allow wildlife to get in.
- If you are a person who regularly works with or around animals that may be exposed to rabies, consider pre-exposure prophylaxis (pre-exposure rabies vaccination).
- Travelers going outside of the United States should check the CDC's Travelers' Health website and the CDC Yellow Book to determine if rabies pre-exposure prophylaxis (pre-exposure rabies vaccination) or other vaccines are recommended before traveling to or through certain areas. Local travel clinics and health departments may also provide this information and the vaccine services.

If you are bitten by a possibly rabid animal or get its saliva on an open, fresh scratch or wound (or on your mucous membranes), immediately wash the wound or exposed area for 15 minutes with soap and clean, running water and seek prompt medical attention to determine if post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) (rabies vaccination after exposure) is needed to prevent development of the disease. Call local animal control to capture the animal, if possible, so it can be evaluated for rabies.

**For more about rabies**, see the N.C. Public Health web site at <http://epi.publichealth.nc.gov/cd/diseases/rabies.html> and CDC at [www.cdc.gov/rabies](http://www.cdc.gov/rabies).