

# RABIES:

## What Cumberland County Residents Should Know



### WHAT IS RABIES?

- Rabies is a disease caused by a virus that is present mostly in the saliva of rabid animals, and it is usually transmitted by the bite of an infected animal.
- The rabies virus causes swelling of the brain and is almost always fatal once symptoms develop.
- In wild and domestic animals, the rabies virus may affect that part of the brain, which regulates behavior. This may result in abnormal aggression, lack of fear of humans, or nocturnal animals coming out during the day.

### HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

- **Make sure your pets have their rabies shots and that they are up-to-date.** In recent years more rabies cases have been seen in cats than in dogs. It is important that cats be vaccinated, as they tend to roam outdoors and have a greater chance of being exposed to rabid animals.
- **Do not handle or feed wild animals.** Especially avoid contact with all bats, raccoons, skunks, groundhogs, and foxes. It is important to remind children of this, especially during the warmer months where they are outside more and may see these animals.
- **Prevent raccoons or bats from entering homes, barns, garages, and other buildings.** Store trash and pet food outside in animal proof containers. Make sure doors and windows are properly closed and chimneys are capped.
- **Avoid contact with strays or pets other than your own.** These animals could bite or scratch you and may not be vaccinated for rabies.

### WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE BITTEN

- **Clean the wound immediately** with soap and water.
- **Get prompt medical attention** from your family doctor or emergency room.
- **Report all animal bites** to the local health department.
- **If you are bitten by a wild animal** notify animal control immediately.
- **If you are bitten by a domestic animal get as much information on the animal as possible.** Such as: owner name, address, telephone number, description of the animal and whether or not the animal has been vaccinated for rabies.
- **If your pet has been bitten by a possible rabid animal the virus can stay alive in the saliva found in the bite.** It is best not to touch your pet and to bring them to the veterinarian right away. If you must handle your pet, it is best to wear gloves and protective clothing.

## **ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICERS**

To report potentially rabid or stray animals please call your **animal control officer**. In:

- Bridgeton call **William Knipe at (856) 451-0033.**
- Commercial Township call **John Hill at (609) 628-0200.**
- Deerfield Township call **Ron Shin at (856) 455-3200.**
- Downe, Fairfield, Greenwich, Hopewell, Stow Creek and Upper Deerfield Townships call **James McCleery at (856) 694-2947.**
- Lawrence and Maurice River Townships call **Ron Sutton Jr. at (856) 691-4333.**
- Millville call **Officer Anthony Cills at (856) 825-7010 x 7622.**
- Shiloh Township call **current Mayor (Brad Campbell) at (856) 451-5136.**

**Yearly rabies clinics are offered by the Cumberland County Health Department. These clinics are typically held during early spring. For more information on these free clinics please call (856) 327-7602.**