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Rabies - Deadly to Pets and People

Domestic Animal Rabies Alert. Four domestic animals have tested positive for Rabies in Minnesota, so far in 2010. The most recent case was a cat from Clay County that was tested positive June 16. The cat had become aggressive towards other animals and bit one person. The family of five that owned the pet all had to undergo post exposure treatment.

Rabies Alert Across All Species. Minnesota has had 20 confirmed rabies cases, including the four domestic animals to date in 2010. Counties with confirmed cases near Zimmerman include Stearns, Benton, Meeker, Hennepin and Ramsey. In Minnesota, the most common wildlife carriers include Skunks and Bats. Common pets and livestock, which are the highest at risk of being infected, include dogs, cats, ferrets, horses and cattle.

Vaccination is the Only Preventative. All pets in the household should be vaccinated for rabies. Even pets that do not go outside are still at risk. It is very common for bats to become trapped inside a house, which could bite your indoor pets as well. Many times once the bat is found, it is unknown if the pet was exposed because bat bites are very small and often go unnoticed.

Rabies Bites. If you believe you have been bit by a rabid animal, thoroughly wash your hands with water and soap. You should seek medical attention immediately. The same goes for your pet, if they have been bitten. After rabies exposure, most people need to go through a series of four vaccinations. Pets with rabies have to be euthanized.

Prevention is Key to Rabies. Vaccinating pets for rabies as a preventative may save your pet's life and prevent people from being exposed or injured. The benefits greatly outweigh the gamble of not vaccinating, and spreading a deadly disease. For the safety of your pets and family, contact your veterinarian if you are unsure if your pets are up-to-date on their rabies vaccinations. If their vaccination is lapsed, make an appointment to update this important vaccination.

For more information, visit the MN Department of Health Website.

<http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/diseases/rabies/rabies.html#animals>

Disclaimer: This written content is meant to be educational and is not medical advice. Always consult a veterinarian about medical advice for your pet.