



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Ashtabula City Health Department

September 8, 2023

RABIES DETECTED IN RACCOON

ASHTABULA CITY

The Ashtabula City Health Department was notified on September 6, 2023 that a raccoon submitted to the Ohio Department of Health Rabies Laboratory has tested positive for rabies. The variant (strain) type is pending confirmation from the CDC.

A resident of Ashtabula City contacted Terri Collett, Environmental Health Director of the Ashtabula City Health Department on September 5, 2023 and reported that his dog had killed a raccoon at their home. No human exposure was reported. Common signs of rabies in wild animals include agitation, disorientation, excessively drooling, wobbling when walking and biting or snapping at people or objects.

Previously Ashtabula County has seen positive rabies cases as follows: 1 fox in 2018 and 1 raccoon in 2019. Ohio has reported 1 positive raccoon in Mahoning County this year, 3 positive raccoons in 2022 in Mahoning County and 3 positive raccoons in Trumbull County and 1 raccoon in Mahoning County in 2021. Historical rabies data can be seen on their website at www.odh.ohio.gov.

Efforts continue to prevent rabies in Ohio with the United States Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, in cooperation with the Ohio Department of Health and several Ohio local health department in the Oral Rabies Vaccine program which distributes a vaccine bait for raccoons and skunks in the counties bordering Pennsylvania annually. The last baiting operation was completed on August 21, 2023 over 513,000 baits were distributed over 8.8 kilometers.

The Ashtabula City Health Department is reminding residents to protect themselves from the threat of rabies by following these precautions:

- Have your pet cats, dogs and ferrets vaccinated for rabies and keep their vaccinations current.
- Do not feed, touch or adopt wild animals and be cautious around stray cats and dogs.
- Teach children to leave wildlife alone and be sure that your child knows to tell you if an animal bites or scratches them.
- Keep trash can lids secure, containers without lids can attract wildlife
- Feed pets indoors, never leave food outdoors that can attract wildlife.
- Report any bite incidents to your local health department and call your doctor for medical advice.

Rabies is a fatal viral zoonotic disease and a serious public health threat. All mammals, such as raccoons, skunks, foxes and bats are believed susceptible to the disease. Rabies is transmitted when the virus is introduced into bite wounds, open cuts in the skin or onto mucous membranes from saliva.

The department is asking residents to report any raccoons, skunks, foxes or bats displaying strange behavior within the city limits to Ashtabula City Health Department by calling 440-992-7121 or the Animal Control Officer at 440-228-3211 Monday thru Friday during the hours of 8:00am to 4:30pm. After hours residents can call the non-emergency Police Department at 440-992-7172. Incidents in Conneaut City may contact Conneaut City Health Department at 440-593-3087 and all other regions of Ashtabula County may contact Ashtabula County Health Department at 440-576-6010.

Anyone with general questions regarding the rabid fox, should contact the Ashtabula City Health Department at 440-992-7121 or the Ohio Department of Health Zoonotic Disease program at 614-752-1029 or by email terri.collett@cityofashtabula.com or zoonoses@odh.ohio.gov.