

September 25, 2018

HEALTH OFFICIALS ISSUE RABIES ALERT

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Immediate Release

Miami – Today, the Florida Department of Health in Miami-Dade County (DOH-Miami-Dade) received confirmation of a cat that tested positive for rabies in North Miami Beach. This was an unvaccinated pet cat that had to be euthanized after it showed neurological symptoms consistent with rabies while in quarantine. There were four human exposures who had been advised to receive rabies post exposure prophylaxis.

This is the seventh confirmed rabid animal (six raccoons and one cat) identified in Miami-Dade for 2018.

The rabies alert for the new area will be issued for 60 days, ending on November 24, 2018. The Miami-Dade County boundaries for this alert is as follows:

- NE 163rd Street to the North,
- NE 151 Street to the South,
- Biscayne Blvd to the East,
- NE 14th Avenue to the West

An animal with rabies could infect other wild or domestic animals that have not been vaccinated against rabies. All domestic animals should be vaccinated against rabies and all wildlife contact should be avoided, particularly raccoons, bats, foxes, skunks, otters, bobcats and coyotes. Rabies is a disease of the nervous system and is fatal to warm-blooded animals and humans. The only treatment for human exposure to rabies is rabies-specific immune globulin and rabies immunization. Appropriate treatment started soon after the exposure, will protect an exposed person from the disease.

Residents and visitors are advised to take the following precautions:

- Keep rabies vaccinations up to date for all pets. **Rabies vaccination is required for dogs, cats, and ferrets in Florida.**
- Keep your pets under direct supervision so they do not come in contact with wild animals. If your pet is bitten by a wild animal, seek veterinary assistance for the animal immediately and contact Miami-Dade Animal Services at 3-1-1.
- Call 3-1-1 to report any stray dogs in your neighborhood or private property owners can hire a nuisance wildlife trapper for removal of wildlife. For a list of wildlife trappers, visit <https://public.myfwc.com/HGM/NWT/NWTSearch.aspx>
- **Do not** handle, feed, or unintentionally attract wild animals with open garbage cans or litter.
- **Do not** leave food sources out for wildlife such as pet food or unsecured garbage.
- **Avoid** contact with stray and feral animals.
- **Never** adopt wild animals or bring them into your home.
- Teach children **never** to handle unfamiliar animals, wild or domestic, even if they appear friendly.

- Prevent bats from entering living quarters or occupied spaces in homes, churches, schools, and other similar areas, where they might come in contact with people and pets.
- **Persons who have been bitten or scratched by wild or domestic animals should seek medical attention and report the injury to the Florida Department of Health in Miami-Dade County at 305-324-2400.**

For further information on rabies, go to <http://www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/rabies/index.html> or call the Florida Department of Health in Miami-Dade County at 305-324-2400, or Animal Services at 3-1-1.

The Department works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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