

Environmental Health: Rabies Control and Your Pets



Last year, the **Mansfield/Ontario/Richland County Health Department** conducted 222 investigations or consultations about possible rabies in dogs and cats and 38 investigation involving rabies in wild animals. Those numbers are expected to rise this year according to Joe Evans, Director of Enviromental Health.

"We've been put on alert from the Ohio Department of Health that rabies could be a critical concern this year due to an explosive growth in the raccoon population," Evans says. The Health Department is responsible for seeing that a suspected case of rabies in an animal, be it a pet or wild animal, is reported to the Ohio Department of Health.

"Obviously, the best way Richland County residents can protect themselves and others from the disease is to be sure to have their pets immunized with rabies vaccine," Evans notes. "Use common sense as well. Never attempt to pet or capture a strange dog or cat and never approach a wild animal, especially one that appears to be behaving in an unusual manner. Teach children these simple rules as well."



Rabies is an infectious viral disease that affects the nervous system of humans and animals and can result in death. People get rabies from the bite of an animal with rabies. Vaccinations must be given immediately after the bite for people to successfully recover. Any wild animal, like a raccoon, skunk, fox, coyote, or bat, can have rabies and transmit it to people. Wild animals account for 92% of all rabies cases. **Take Pride in Richland County: Immunize Pets Against Rabies!**



*For several years a free rabies clinic has been run in Richland County to immunize cats and dogs from deadly rabies. **This year's clinic will be May 3.** Check our website for more information.*



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