



News Release

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Confirmed Rabid Skunk in Northeast Colorado

Northeast Colorado has its first confirmed case of rabies in 2018. The rabid skunk, found in Morgan County near Snyder, exposed 2 domestic dogs to the disease. It is important to vaccinate your animals against rabies because once symptoms start, rabies is nearly always fatal. If your pet has not been vaccinated for rabies and encounters a confirmed rabid animal, the recommendation is euthanasia for your pet. Vaccinating your pet is your first line of defense in protecting your entire family from coming into contact with this deadly disease. A licensed veterinarian must perform vaccinations in order to be considered valid.

Rabies is a virus that affects the nervous system of humans and other mammals, resulting in a fatal disease. The most common route of rabies transmission is from the bite or scratch of a rabid animal; however, transmission can also occur through contact with saliva or nervous system tissue of a rabid animal through the eyes, nose, mouth, or an open cut or wound.

The Northeast Colorado Health Department would like to remind everyone to be vigilant as we move into the spring and summer months as we tend to see an increase in pet and human exposure to rabid animals. Much of the rabies exposure in Northeast Colorado has been from skunks. However, rabies can be transmitted to any warm-blooded animal and can often be found in raccoons, coyotes, foxes, feral cats, and bats. Signs of rabies in animals include abnormal behavior like being active in the day for nocturnal species, approaching humans or animals, aggressive behavior, difficulty walking and unusual vocalization.

The most effective way to prevent possible exposure to rabies is by keeping your pet's vaccinations up to date. Always leave wildlife alone, especially ill or injured animals and do not take in or feed stray animals, especially feral cats. If you suspect a family member or pet has been bitten or scratched by any domestic animal or bat, contact your medical provider or your pet's veterinarian immediately. For more information, visit www.nchd.org/rabies or call 970-522-3741.

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