

August 16, 2021

LOCAL HEALTH OFFICIAL ISSUES RABIES ALERT

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Saint Augustine, Fla. – This alert is issued today by Florida Department of Health in St. Johns County (DOH-St. Johns) in response to a laboratory-confirmed case of rabies associated with a raccoon identified in a residential area of southeast Saint Johns County, FL.

Rabies is a disease of the nervous system. Without timely treatment, rabies is without cure and can be lethal to humans should they be scratched or bitten. Be aware that the rabies disease is present in the wild animal population and, as a result, places the health of humans and that of unvaccinated domestic animals at risk.

This rabies alert is issued for a duration of 60 days for the following area of southeast Saint Johns County within zip-code 32084 and is centered by the following *Helen Street* and *Spring Street* and the alert extends outward to the following roadways:

- To the west: *Francis Street*
- To the north: *Theodore Street*
- To the east: *Florida Avenue*
- To the south: *Pearl Street*

****Please be aware that rabies activity can also occur outside the alert area referenced above.**

It is important to know that rabies can be fatal to both warm blooded animals and humans. The only treatment for human exposure to rabies is rabies-specific immune globulin and rabies immunization. Timely treatment after an exposure will protect an exposed person from the disease. This alert serves as a reminder that, for public health and animal welfare, all domestic animals should be vaccinated against rabies. Additionally, the general public is reminded that contact with wildlife should be avoided, particularly about raccoons, bats, foxes, skunks, otters, bobcats, and coyotes.

Residents and visitors are advised to take the following precautions:

- If bitten or scratched by a wild or domestic animal, seek immediate medical attention and report the injury to **Florida Department of Health in St. Johns County at 904-506-6081**.
- Keep rabies vaccinations up-to-date for all pets and at-risk livestock.
- Do not allow your pets to run free. Follow leash laws by keeping pets and livestock secured on your property. If your pet or livestock are bitten by a wild animal, then seek veterinary assistance for the animal immediately and contact **St. Johns County's Animal Control Department at 904-209-0746**.
- Support animal control in efforts to reduce feral and stray animal populations.
- Spay or neuter your pets to help reduce the number of unwanted pets that may not be properly cared for or regularly vaccinated.
- Do not handle, feed, or unintentionally attract wild animals with outdoor food sources such as uncovered trash or litter.
- 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 encounter people and pets.

Public health and safety information on Rabies is available online via the following Florida Department of Health webpage: www.FloridaHealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/rabies/index.html.

About the Florida Department of Health - The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts. Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and Twitter at [@HealthyFla](#). For more information about the Florida Department of Health please visit www.FloridaHealth.gov.

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