

October 4, 2019

PASCO COUNTY HEALTH OFFICIALS ISSUE RABIES ALERT



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New Port Richey, Fla. — The Florida Department of Health in Pasco County has issued a rabies alert for the southwest region of Zephyrhills. This is in response to a raccoon that tested positive for rabies reported on October 3, 2019. The raccoon was tested after it attacked an owned dog the previous day. The dog was recently vaccinated against rabies and has been placed on observation.

All residents and visitors in Pasco County should be aware that rabies is present in the wild animal population and domestic animals are at risk if not vaccinated. The public is asked to maintain a heightened awareness that rabies is active in Pasco County. Alerts are designed to increase awareness to the public, but they should not give a false sense of security to areas that have not been named as under an alert.

The recent rabies alert is for 60 days. The center of the rabies alert is in the southwest region of Zephyrhills and includes the following area boundaries:

- North boundary – Eiland Blvd.
- West boundary – Coates Rd/Dean Dairy Rd.
- South boundary – Tucker Rd.
- East boundary – 20th St.

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.
- 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.

- **Do not** handle, feed, or unintentionally attract wild animals with open garbage cans or litter or by leaving pet food outside.
- **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.
- If you are bitten by any animal seek care promptly. Wash the wound thoroughly with soap and water. Go to your family doctor or hospital for medical attention immediately.
- Contact Pasco County Animal Services at (727) 834-3216, (813) 929-1212, or (352) 521-5194 to report animal bites or scratches.
- Contact the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission at 863-648-3200 for concerns about wild animals.

For further information on rabies, go to [Florida Department of Health website](#) or call the Florida Department of Health Pasco County at (352) 521-1450 option 5.

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.

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