



District 2 Public Health

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Banks, Dawson, Forsyth, Franklin, Habersham, Hall, Hart, Lumpkin, Rabun, Stephens, Towns, Union and White Counties

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Positive Rabies Case in Habersham County

Take Precautions to Keep our Community Safe

On August 27th, a cat tested positive for rabies in Habersham County in the area of Sunshine Circle and Ivie Street (Cornelia). Because rabies incidents are recurrent in District 2, it is crucial to take precautions to protect yourself, your pets, and your family.

Preventative Measures: See the preventative guidelines from the CDC and other experts below.

- Ensure your pets and livestock have received the most current rabies vaccination.
- Seek medical care promptly if you suspect potential rabies exposure.
- Avoid interacting with wild or unfamiliar animals. If you find an injured animal, refrain from feeding or attempting to help it.
- Encourage children to “love your own, leave other animals alone” as the Georgia Department of Public Health recommends.
- If you feed your pets outdoors, remove any leftover food to prevent attracting wild animals.

Rabies is a fatal, but preventable virus that primarily affects wild mammals, including raccoons, skunks, bats, and foxes in Georgia. It spreads to other wild animals, pets, livestock, or humans, through bites, scratches, or exposure to the saliva of an infected animal. Once contracted, the virus spreads to the brain, causing inflammation that is usually fatal once symptoms appear. However, if treatment is sought immediately after exposure, rabies can be treated effectively.

What to do if Exposed to Rabies: If you believe you’ve been exposed to rabies clean any wounds with soap and water and seek medical care immediately. Rabies post-exposure prophylaxis is a highly effective treatment if administered quickly after exposure. It includes a vaccine series that is serviced at all major hospitals in District 2. If left untreated, the virus is almost always fatal. Your local Environmental Health Office has information regarding vaccine access programs.

Signs of Rabid Animals: Infected animals may display behaviors such as restlessness, aggression, trouble walking, or seem unusually friendly. The Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has rigid regulations that prohibit the keeping of wild animals. If you see a wild animal acting strangely, avoid the animal and call the DNR Ranger Hotline at: 1-800-241-4113. To report an animal bite, please notify your local Health Department as soon as possible or if after hours, contact Georgia Poison Control at 1-800-282-5846.

Stay informed and take precautions. To learn more about rabies prevention and treatment, visit:
<https://phdistrict2.org/environmental-health/7/> and <https://dph.georgia.gov/environmental-health/rabies>.

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