



Department of Health
Agency of Human Services



16th Annual Rabies Bait Drop Begins August 15

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BURLINGTON – New sweet-smelling baits rather than fishmeal-flavored morsels are being used for the first time this year for the 16th annual rabies bait drop.

“The goal of the bait drop is to prevent the northern spread of raccoon rabies into Canada,” said Health Department veterinarian Robert Johnson. “The new bait has shown favorable results in vaccinating not only raccoons, but skunks as well. Quebec has used this bait since 2008 and has not had a raccoon rabies strain case since 2009.”

Starting on Aug. 15 – Aug. 21 more than 227,000 baits will be air dropped from U.S. Department of Agriculture planes flying at low altitude (500 feet) over northern Vermont, and more than 15,000 baits will be hand placed (also beginning on Aug. 15) in rural areas of communities where wildlife is common.

The baits cannot cause rabies and are not harmful to children or pets if touched or eaten, but the packets (about the size of a quarter) should not be handled. If a bait is discovered on a lawn or driveway, use a plastic bag or glove to place it in a wooded or brushy area where a raccoon or skunk can find it. After moving the bait, wash your hands with soap and water.



Thirty-one animals have tested positive for rabies so far in 2012, an increase from 28 animals who tested positive in 2011. There has never been a human case of rabies reported to the Vermont Department of Health.

Steps you can take to prevent rabies:

- Do not touch or pick up wild animals or strays, even baby animals.
- Do not feed them or make them into pets.
- Make sure that all family pets get rabies shots, and keep shots up-to-date. Vaccines start protecting dogs and cats about two weeks to a month after they get the shot.
- Report unknown or strangely behaving animals to your town's animal control officer. If the animal is wild, contact your game warden.
- Do not make your yard inviting to wild animals. Practice good birdfeeder etiquette. Secure trash, including recyclables.
- Fasten trash can lids tightly.
- Raccoon-proof your compost.
- Feed pets inside the house.
- Keep pets indoors at night. If they are out during the day, keep them on a leash or in a closed space. Pets that roam free are more likely to get rabies. Vaccinated animals are unlikely to get rabies.
- Wear protective gloves when handling a pet that has been involved with a wild or stray animal.

For more information on rabies prevention efforts in Vermont visit:
<http://healthvermont.gov/prevent/rabies/Rabies.aspx>.

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