



PRESS RELEASE
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WORLD RABIES DAY 2020
End Rabies: Collaborate, Vaccinate

(SANTA BARBARA, Calif.) -- The Santa Barbara County Public Health Department is joining the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in recognizing, today, September 28, 2020 as World Rabies Day. The theme for World Rabies Day 2020 is “End Rabies: Collaborate, Vaccinate.” Rabies is a preventable viral disease that is most often transmitted through the bite of a rabid animal. Rabies can pass from wild animals, commonly bats and skunks in Santa Barbara County, to pets. Although transmission to humans is rare, the disease is nearly always fatal.

If you have been in contact with any wildlife or unfamiliar animals, particularly if you have been bitten or scratched, you should talk with a healthcare provider as soon as possible to determine your risk for rabies or other illnesses. It is important to know that, unlike most other animals that carry rabies, many types of bats have very small teeth, which may leave marks that disappear quickly and can be easily missed. If you are unsure, seek medical advice to be safe.

Many times, animal bites or scratches go unreported. It is very important to report these incidents, especially if the animal has symptoms of rabies including agitation, biting and snapping, drooling, acting disoriented, appearing partially paralyzed, or generally acting sick. Please call your nearest County Animal Services office to report these incidents:

- Santa Barbara: (805) 681-5285
- Lompoc: (805) 737-7755
- Santa Maria: (805) 934-6119

Rabies vaccinations are recommended for all warm-blooded domestic animals including cats, dogs, horses, and livestock. Santa Barbara County residents and their pets often live in close contact with wildlife. Community members can protect their pets by keeping them indoors at night, walking them with a leash, scanning the yard for wildlife before allowing them outside, and not leaving food outside that will attract wildlife. If you notice a typically nocturnal animal that is active during the day and acting abnormally, please contact Santa Barbara County Animal Services for assistance.

Rabies is a preventable disease that can be avoided by leaving all wildlife alone and vaccinating your family pets.