

Rabies



Rabies in Latin means: "MADNESS"

Did you know in Ontario there is a law that states, "Every owner/person having the care and custody of a cat or dog three months of age or over shall ensure that the cat or dog is immunized against rabies."

What is Rabies?

Rabies is a virus that affects the neurons in the brain. It causes myeloencephalitis in ALL MAMMALS, including humans.

Clinical signs of Rabies

Signs can include:

- 🐾 Behavioral changes
- 🐾 Difficulty swallowing
- 🐾 Excess salivation
- 🐾 Extruded penis
- 🐾 Hind limb ataxia
- 🐾 Depression
- 🐾 Stupor

There are 3 stages of rabies...

- 🐾 Stage 1- the prodromal stage (changes in behaviour—wild animals become friendly, nocturnal animals come out during the day, dogs and cats become fearful or apprehensive)
- 🐾 Stage 2 – the excitable (furious) stage (may appear hyperactive, may attack unprovoked or attack inanimate objects. Some may appear to be in a stupor ("dumb" rabies).
- 🐾 Stage 3 – the paralytic stage (in which the animal experiences paralysis of the hind limb (and sometimes face) eventually leading to respiratory paralysis and death. These 3 stages maybe completed in less than 1 week!

How is Rabies spread?

Rabies is spread through the saliva of an infected animal and may enter the body from a bite, an open wound, or via the mouth- it has also been recorded that if an infected animal was to say sneeze and the saliva from the sneeze was to land on your face/mouth/eyes etc. the virus can enter your body that way as well. The time from exposure to symptoms is about as little as 9 days but commonly 3-8 weeks or longer.

Diagnosis of Rabies:

Post-mortem test of brain tissue is definitive way to test for rabies. There is no test available to test for rabies while the animal is still living.

Treatment of Rabies:

If suspected- the animal should be euthanized. Vaccinated animals exposed to a rapid animal should be revaccinated and observed for 90 days. Unvaccinated animals should be euthanized or kept under strict isolation for 6 months.

Rabies has no cure!
Vaccinate! Vaccinate! Vaccinate!