



Police Department
CHIEF JOSEPH T. CLARK

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: June 3, 2010

SUBJECT: Rabies Virus Awareness

Rabies is a valid concern in Texas; there are hundreds of confirmed cases each year in the state. The risk of exposure increases during spring and summer as there is more activity on the part of animals and humans alike. Since January 1, 2010 there have been 5 positive rabies cases in animals confirmed in Denton County. A rabid skunk was confirmed in May 2010 in The Colony.

Rabies is a viral disease that affects the brain and nerves and is carried in the saliva of an affected mammal. Most often exposure occurs when a rabid animal bites another animal or a person. There are, however, other methods of exposure. Many animals groom themselves by licking their paws and rubbing their neck and face. Therefore exposure can occur when an infected animal scratches another animal or person. Saliva from an infected animal coming into contact with the eyes, nose, mouth or open wound of another animal or person may also spread the virus.

The state of Texas cites 5 species as being at the highest risk for carrying the rabies virus: coyotes, foxes, raccoons, skunks and bats. Contact by pets or people with any of these animals should be immediately reported to The Colony Animal Control so that steps can be taken to insure the health of the potential victims.

There are some very simple steps that can be taken to prevent the spread of the rabies virus:

- Insure your pets are vaccinated against the rabies virus. State law requires all dogs and cats be vaccinated against the rabies virus by a licensed veterinarian every year or every 3 years, depending on the type of vaccination administered.
- Obey leash laws. Keep your pets contained inside a fence that keeps them in and other animals out. When walking your pet, keep her on a leash; don't allow her to wander as this increases the chance of her coming into contact with wild animals.
- If you are bitten or scratched by any animal, immediately wash and flush the affected area with soap and water for a minimum of 3 minutes and report the incident to The Colony Animal Control.
- If you find a dead animal in your pet's play area/yard, contain your pet in such a way as to keep it from coming into contact with the animal and call The Colony Animal Control to have the animal removed.
- If you find a downed bat, erratic skunk, raccoon, fox or coyote, report the animal to The Colony Animal Control immediately and under no circumstance touch the animal.

For more information, please contact The Colony Animal Shelter at 972-370-9250 or www.thecolonytx.gov, or Patricia Barrington, The Colony Animal Shelter 972-370-9250 pbarrington@thecolonytx.gov