



Rick Scott
Governor

H. Frank Farmer, Jr., MD, PhD, FACP
State Surgeon General

December 12, 2011

Contact: Maggie Hall, Public Information Director
Pinellas County Health Department
(727) 824-6908 Margarita_Hall@doh.state.fl.us (media only)



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY FROM RABIES

The Pinellas County Health Department and Pinellas County Animal Services are reminding county residents that a bite, scratch or contact with the paws or saliva of an infected animal can transmit rabies.

This disease is nearly always fatal, but can be prevented if an exposed person is treated early with a vaccine regimen.

Pinellas children and adults who handled a bat recently were given a series of vaccines as a precaution. Bats, raccoons and coyotes are frequent carriers of rabies and should never be touched by anyone other than trained handlers.

Prevention is the best protection from rabies. To control the spread of rabies, follow these guidelines:

***Keep your pets' rabies vaccinations current to protect them from contact with wild animals that may be carriers. Your pet's vet or Pinellas County Animal Services can provide the vaccinations.

***Never feed, pet or interact with wildlife or strays.

***Do not leave food outdoors for pets or wildlife.

***Report animal bites or scratches to Animal Services.

***Keep pets at home in a fenced yard or on a leash. If a stray or wild animal bites your pet, seek veterinary assistance for your pet immediately.

***Never adopt wild animals or bring them into your home. Do not try to nurse sick animals to health. Call Pinellas County Animal Services, (727) 582-2600, or an animal rescue agency for assistance.

The Pinellas County Health Department has information about rabies and links to additional information from the Florida Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Go to <http://pinellashealth.com/RabiesHelpfulLinks.asp>.

-end-