

TOTOWA HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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TOTOWA HEALTH DEPARTMENT ISSUES RABIES ALERT

Rabid Raccoon Picked up in the Area of Washington Place.

For Immediate Release

June 26, 2020

Contact: Totowa Health Department

[Totowa] - The Totowa Health Department is issuing a Rabies Alert to residents who may have had contact with a rabid raccoon found in the area of Washington Place in Totowa. The raccoon, which was picked up by Paterson's Animal Control Division on 6/20/20, and tested by the New Jersey Department of Health Public Health Laboratories, was confirmed to have tested positive for rabies. If you suspect that you or your pet has come into contact with this raccoon or another raccoon in the area, immediately call the Totowa Health Department for any general questions or contact your healthcare provider to determine the best course of action.

Anyone bitten by a rabid animal, or having close contact with its saliva, needs to receive **immediate** rabies vaccination. When administered early enough and *before* symptoms appear, rabies treatment is 100% effective. Once symptoms occur, the disease is almost always fatal.

Direct contact with wild or stray animals, even baby animals, is always risky. Parents should instruct children to refrain from touching unfamiliar animals and to immediately tell an adult if they have been bitten or scratched by an animal.

Signs of rabies in animals include:

- changes in an animal's behavior
- general sickness
- problems swallowing
- an increase in drool or saliva or "frothing at the mouth"
- wild animals that appear abnormally tame or sick
- animals that may bite at everything if excited
- difficulty moving or paralysis
- death

It is crucial that Totowa residents be responsible pet owners. **Keep vaccinations up-to-date** for all cats, dogs, and ferrets. This requirement is important not only to keep your pets from getting rabies, but also to provide a barrier of protection to you if your animal is bitten by a rabid wild animal. Also, **keep your pets under direct supervision** so they do not come in contact with wild animals. If your pet is bitten by a wild animal, seek veterinary assistance for the animal immediately. Finally, **spay or neuter** your pets to help reduce the number of unwanted pets that may not be properly cared for or regularly vaccinated.

Residents are encouraged to keep a lookout and to report any suspicious or sick animals such as bats, raccoons, foxes, skunks, dogs, or cats to Animal Control **immediately**. If an incident occurs after normal business hours please call the Totowa Police non-emergency number 973-790-3700 . **Do not attempt to capture or handle the animal.**