

## **FACTS ON RABIES**

### **What is rabies?**

The rabies virus is carried in the saliva of rabid animals. The disease can infect animals and humans, and it can cause death if not treated immediately. Rabies is spread mainly by foxes, skunks, bats and raccoons. Rabies is spread to humans from rabid pets/wild animals.

### **How do people get rabies?**

Rabies is transmitted through saliva of infected animals, primarily via bite wounds. It can also be spread through infected saliva entering an open cut or wound, or contacting mucous membranes, such as the eyes, nasal cavity or the mouth.

### **How can I tell if an animal has rabies?**

You may not be able to tell if an animal has rabies by just looking at it. Animal with rabies often act strangely. Rabies appears in two basic forms: dumb and furious. Signs of dumb rabies include wild animals losing their fear of humans, nocturnal animals coming out in the day and animals showing signs of paralysis. Signs of the furious rabies may include aggressiveness and the animal may attack objects or people. Other symptoms include paralysis in back legs, difficulty eating and drinking, heavy drooling and abnormal barking.

### **What to do if you are bitten?**

- If you are bitten by an animal, immediately wash the wound with soap and water to remove as much of the animal's saliva as possible.
- Avoid splashing wash water into your eyes, nose, or mouth as the virus can enter your body through these mucous membranes.
- Contact your doctor, visit the Emergency Department of your local hospital, or go to a walk-in clinic.
- Report the bite to the North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit at (705) 474-1400 or 1-800-563-2808 in accordance with the Health Protection and Promotion Act.

### **What can I do to prevent rabies?**

- Stay away from dogs and cats that you do not know, that appear ill or are acting strangely.
- Stay away from wild animals including bats, skunks, foxes and raccoons.
- Do not let your pet run free in the neighborhood and keep them indoors at night.
- Store all garbage in metal containers with secure lids so you do not attract wildlife.
- Make sure your pet(s) are vaccinated against rabies.