



**Northwestern  
Health Unit**

www.nwhu.on.ca

For immediate release  
July 5, 2018

## **Changes to rabies vaccination requirement for pets**

The Northwestern Health Unit is asking pet owners to ensure their pet's rabies vaccinations are up-to-date. Ontario recently amended pet ownership laws under the Health Protection and Promotion Act (HPPA). The Northwestern Health Unit area was previously exempt from mandatory rabies vaccination for pets but as of July 1, 2018:

- All dogs, cats and ferrets over the age of 3 months in Ontario must be vaccinated regularly against rabies
- All horses, cattle and sheep intended to come into direct contact with the general public must also be vaccinated; and
- Horses, cattle and sheep which are only accessible to persons responsible for their care and control will remain exempt from the rabies immunization requirement

Rabies vaccinations for your pets need to be updated every 1 to 3 years depending on the vaccine product given. Contact your veterinarian for more information about vaccination or to inquire if your pet's vaccinations are up-to-date.

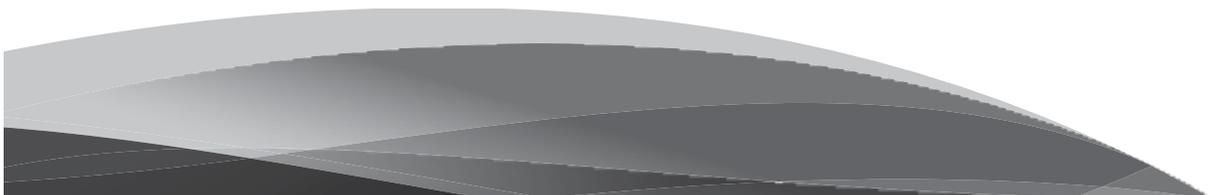
Rabies is a deadly disease caused by a virus that attacks the central nervous systems (brain and spinal cord) of mammals. Humans and other animals can become infected from a bite, or in some cases a scratch, of a rabid animal.

To prevent rabies:

- Keep your pets rabies vaccination up-to-date
- Avoid feeding or handling wild animals
- Avoid strays and don't pet animals you don't know
- Supervise your pets. Don't let them run free, especially at night
- Don't leave your pet's food outside. This can attract other unwanted animals
- Do not touch domestic or wild animals that look sick or are acting strangely even if you want to help them

If you have been bitten by an animal:

- Wash the wound with soap and water
- Contact your family doctor immediately. The Health Unit can provide post-exposure rabies vaccine to your doctor if needed
- As soon as you can, call the health unit to report the incident. The health unit will investigate all reports of animal bites and scratches to assess the risk of rabies. If the animal does not have an up-to-date rabies vaccination, the owner can be fined.





**Northwestern  
Health Unit**

[www.nwhu.on.ca](http://www.nwhu.on.ca)

For further information about rabies immunization requirements for animals under the HPPA please contact the NWHU and speak to a Public Health Inspector or visit [www.nwhu.on.ca](http://www.nwhu.on.ca).

-30-

Media Contact:  
Mike Mackie  
Public Health Inspector  
(807) 223-3301 ext. 3523  
[mmackie@nwhu.on.ca](mailto:mmackie@nwhu.on.ca)

