



For Immediate Release

September 1, 2020

## **RABIES ADVISORY ISSUED FOR LEON COUNTY**

Tallahassee, FL--- The Florida Department of Health in Leon County has issued a county-wide rabies advisory for Leon County. This advisory is in response to recent interactions with wildlife and in two cases, aggressive wildlife. These interactions occurred on the following dates: July 7, July 27, and August 23. This is a county-wide advisory as all recent interactions with aggressive wildlife cannot be contained to one territory.

All residents and visitors in Leon County should be aware that rabies is present in the wild animal population and domestic animals are at risk if not vaccinated. The public is asked to maintain a heightened awareness.

An animal with rabies could infect other wild animals or domestic animals that have not been vaccinated against rabies. All domestic animals should be vaccinated against rabies and humans should avoid all wildlife contact, especially with raccoons, bats, and foxes. Rabies is a disease of the nervous system and is usually fatal to warm-blooded animals and to humans. The only treatment for human exposure to rabies is rabies-specific immune globulin and rabies immunization. Appropriate treatment, started soon after exposure, will protect an exposed person from the disease.

Residents and visitors are advised to take the following precautions to protect themselves:

- Do not handle, feed or unintentionally attract wild animals with outdoor food sources such as uncovered trash or litter and uneaten pet food.
- Never adopt wild animals or bring them into your home.
- Teach children never to handle unfamiliar animals, wild or domestic, even if they appear friendly.
- If you see a wild animal that appears to be in distress, contact Leon County Animal Control at (850) 606-5400.
- Keep rabies vaccinations up to date for all pets and at-risk livestock.
- Do not allow your pets to run free. Follow leash laws by keeping pets and livestock secured on your property. If your pet or livestock are bitten by a wild animal, seek veterinary assistance for the animal immediately and contact Leon County Animal Control.
- Support animal control in efforts to reduce feral and stray animal populations.
- Spay or neuter your pets to help reduce the number of unwanted pets that may not be properly cared for or regularly vaccinated.
- Prevent bats from entering living quarters or occupied spaces in homes, churches, schools and other similar areas, where they might come in contact with people and pets.
- Persons who have been bitten or scratched by wild or domestic animals should seek medical attention and report the injury to the DOH- Leon Environmental Health Division at (850) 895-8360.

For further information on rabies go to <http://www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/rabies/index.html>

**About the Florida Department of Health**

The Florida Department of Health, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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