

December 6, 2017

FERAL CAT TESTS POSITIVE FOR RABIES IN GENEVA AREA



Contact:

Mirna Chamorro

(407) 665-3374

Mirna.chamorro@flhealth.gov health.gov

SANFORD, Fla. – The Florida Department of Health in Seminole County (DOH-Seminole) is notifying the neighborhoods surrounding Lake Harney Shores in Geneva of a feral cat which tested positive for rabies in that area. Residents in the Lake Harney Shores area should avoid contact with feral cats, stray dogs and all wildlife. If you, a family member or someone you know thinks that they were bitten or scratched by a feral cat or if you know of anyone who was bitten or scratched by the cat that tested positive for rabies, contact Seminole County Animal Services at (407) 665-5201 or the Florida Department of Health in Seminole County at (407) 665-3284.

Residents and visitors in Seminole 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 that rabies is active in Seminole County.

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. Contact to feral cats, stray dogs and all wildlife particularly raccoons, bats, foxes, skunks, otters, bobcats and coyotes should be avoided.

The following advice is issued:

- All pets should have current rabies immunizations.
- Secure outside garbage in covered containers to avoid attracting wild animals.
- Do not leave pet food outside. This also attracts other animals.
- Avoid contact with **all** wildlife, especially feral cats, raccoons, bats, and foxes.
- If bitten or scratched by a suspected rabid animal, wash the wound immediately with soap and water, seek medical attention, and promptly report the incident to Seminole County Animal Services.
- Rabies is preventable when treatment is provided in a timely manner.
- For general questions pertaining to animals, contact Seminole County Animal Control.

Rabies is a disease of the nervous system that can cause paralysis and is fatal to warm blooded animals and humans. The virus is spread through saliva, and humans may become infected through a bite wound, scratch or exposure of a fresh cut to saliva of a rabid animal. The only treatment for human exposure to rabies is rabies specific immune globulin and rabies immunization. Appropriate treatment started soon after the exposure will protect an exposed person from the disease.

To view a Rabies Prevention Tips educational video please visit <https://youtu.be/t39LoYhJg48> . For more information on rabies, visit the DOH website at <http://www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/rabies/index.html> or the CDC website at www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/rabies.

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