

April 5, 2023

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH IN PASCO COUNTY (DOH- PASCO) ISSUES RABIES ALERT



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New Port Richey - Mike Napier, County Health Officer, Florida Department of Health in Pasco County (DOH-Pasco), has issued a rabies alert for the west central geographical region of Pasco County. This is in response to a cat that tested positive for rabies reported on April 4, 2023.

All citizens in Pasco 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 Pasco County. Alerts are designed to increase awareness to the public, but they should not give a false sense of security to areas that have not been named as under an alert.

The recent rabies alert is for 60 days. The center of the rabies alert is in the west central area of Pasco County and includes the following area boundaries:

- North of Ridge Road
- South of Midvale Avenue
- West of the Pithlachascotee River
- East of Moon Lake Road

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 all wildlife contact should be avoided, particularly raccoons, bats, foxes, skunks, otters, bobcats, and coyotes. Rabies is a disease of the nervous system and is fatal to warm-blooded animals and humans. 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.

The following advice is issued:

- Keep rabies vaccinations up-to-date for all pets.
- If your pet is bitten by a wild animal, seek veterinary assistance for the animal immediately.
- **Do not** handle, feed, or unintentionally attract wild animals by leaving pet food outside, or garbage cans open.
- **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.
- 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.
- If you are bitten by any animal seek care promptly. Wash the wound thoroughly with soap and water. Go to your family doctor or hospital for medical attention immediately.
- Contact [Pasco County Animal Services](#) at (727) 834-3216, (813) 929-1212, or (352) 521-5194 to report animal bites or scratches and for information on stray dogs and cats.
- Contact the [Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission](#) at 1-863-648-3203 for concerns about wild animals.

For further information on rabies, please visit the [Florida Department of Health](#) website or contact the [Florida Department of Health in Pasco County](#), (352) 521-1450 option 4.

About the Florida Department of Health

The Department, 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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