

County Warns of Possible Rabies in Cats

Health department says a raccoon may have infected several cats.

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The health department in Jefferson County, W.Va., is warning residents that a raccoon that tested positive for rabies might have infected several area cats.

The raccoon attacked and killed at least one cat before a Charles Town Police Officer responded and killed the raccoon, according to a news release from the health department. The release also states that the raccoon later tested positive for rabies.

Rabies in cats is expressed most commonly in two forms: paralytic rabies and "furious" rabies. Paralytic rabies usually is accompanied by symptoms such as shyness or unapproachability. The animal may hide, or behave in a sluggish, confused or depressed manner.

Cats and other animals with "furious" rabies usually are excitable, irritable and aggressive. They may seem calm but confused and could attack when approached. They might also lose all caution toward natural predators.

Other signs of a rabies infection include inability to eat or drink; drooling; convulsions; staggering; weakness and paralysis; and frothing at the mouth.

The Jefferson County Health Department has asked that area residents observe their cats for the aforementioned behaviors and to have cats that haven't been vaccinated within the past two years see a veterinarian immediately.

For more information, contact the Jefferson County Health Department at (304) 728-8415 or Animal Control at (304) 728-3289.