



Health Alert Network

Tri-County Health Department

Serving Adams, Arapahoe and Douglas Counties

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The pages that follow contain information critical to protecting the health of your patients and the citizens of Colorado.

HAN ADVISORY

Number of pages including cover: 3

Subject: **Advisory - Rabies in Colorado 2017 - March 28, 2017**

Message ID: 3/28/2017 1:15:00 PM

Recipients: HAN Community Members.

From: TRI-COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Adams, Arapahoe and Douglas County, Colorado

Recipient Instructions: **For your information. No response required.**

You have received this message based upon the information contained within our Health Alert Network Notification System. If you have a different or additional e-mail or fax address that you would like us to use, or if you have additional questions, call 720-200-1477.

Categories of Health Alert Network Messages:

Health Alert: Conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: Provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update: Provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

Info Service/Public Health Brief: Provides general information that is not necessarily considered to be of an emergent nature.

You may download a copy of this HAN from the TCHD website at
<http://www.tchd.org/259/Health-Alert-Network>



HEALTH ADVISORY | Rabies in Colorado 2017 | March 28, 2017

Health care providers: Please distribute widely in your office.

Key points

- As temperatures increase in Colorado, we normally see an increase in the number of people bitten by animals.
- As animals become more active at this time of year, the risk of disease transmission, including rabies among wildlife, also increases.
- **Animal bites from rabies reservoir species (bats, skunks, foxes, raccoons, coyotes and other wild carnivores) are a 24-hour reportable condition. Healthcare providers must contact the local or state health department to report bites to ensure rabies prevention and control.**
- Starting May 2017, healthcare providers must report bites from dogs and cats within 24 hours and provide pet owner name and location, if known, for the biting animal.
- Skunk variant rabies has been present in the eastern counties of Colorado since 2007. Bat variant rabies is present throughout the state.
- Skunk variant rabies is now present in most counties along the Front Range to the Kansas border. Broomfield County identified the county's first positive skunk on Feb. 27, 2017.
- From Jan. 1 - March 24, 2017 eight animals (seven skunks and one coyote) have been confirmed rabid in Colorado.

Background information

The establishment of endemic rabies in Colorado skunks, especially in urban areas, has had enormous public health repercussions. With the high risk of rabies in wild animals (especially skunks), laboratory-based rabies surveillance is essential for rabies prevention and control. This surveillance allows accurate information to guide human post-exposure prophylaxis decisions, determine the management of potentially exposed animals, aid in emerging pathogen discovery, and describe the epidemiology of rabies.

Rabies in humans is almost 100 percent fatal once symptoms are present. For this reason, animal bites are reportable in Colorado so that risk assessment and appropriate follow-up of bitten individuals can be completed.

Recommendations / guidance

Animal bites to humans by bats, skunks, foxes, raccoons, coyotes, and other wild carnivores, must be reported to the local or state health department within 24 hours. Local public health agencies will conduct risk assessments on patients bitten by these animals to determine the need for animal testing or rabies post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP). Rabies reservoir species (bats, skunks, raccoons, or foxes) can be tested to see if they had rabies at the time of the bite. If a human has been bitten by an animal that tests positive for rabies, PEP should be initiated as soon as possible. Providers should follow the guidance available at <https://goo.gl/INrGOs>. This information was created using ACIP recommendations available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5902a1.htm>.

Starting May 2017, healthcare providers must report bites from dogs and cats within 24 hours and provide pet owner name and location, if known, for the biting animal. Cats, dogs and ferrets should be placed on a 10-day bite hold after the bite occurs. The local animal control agency can assist with this.

For more information

For additional information on rabies, including the most up-to-date case count, visit:
<https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/rabies-data>