



Charlie Crist
Governor

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State Surgeon General

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: December 20, 2010

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RABIES ALERT ISSUED FOR ST. JOHNS COUNTY

ST. AUGUSTINE, FL - Dawn C. Allicock, M.D., M.P.H., Director, St. Johns County Health Department, has issued a rabies alert for St. Johns County. This is in response to a feral cat that tested positive for rabies, reported on December 20, 2010.

All citizens in St. Johns 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 St. Johns 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.

This rabies alert is for 60 days. The center of the rabies alert is located on Rio Vista Avenue and includes the following area boundaries in St. Johns County:

- North to Ponce Island Drive
- South to Rambla Street
- East to the Intracoastal Waterway
- West to Lewis Speedway

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:

- 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.
- For questions regarding the health of an animal, contact a veterinarian.
- Veterinarian staff and animal control staff should be alert for animals encountered with signs suspicious for rabies and use appropriate precautions, especially when working with unvaccinated animals.
- Persons who have been bitten or scratched by wild or domestic animals should seek medical attention and report the injury to the St. Johns County Health Department at 904-825-5055, Ext. 1090.
- Rabies is preventable when treatment is provided in a timely manner.
- Avoid contact with **all** wildlife, especially raccoons, bats, and foxes.
- No animal is too young to have rabies.

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St. Johns County Health Department
1955 US 1 South, Suite 100 • St. Augustine, FL 32086
Phone: (904) 825-5055
www.StJohnsCHD.org



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For general questions pertaining to animals, or to report a suspicious or aggressive animal, contact St. Johns County Animal Control at 904-209-0746.

For further information on rabies, you can go to the Florida Department of Health website: <http://www.doh.state.fl.us/environment/medicine/rabies/rabies-index.html> or contact the St. Johns County Health Department, Environmental Public Health Service Center at 904-823-2514.

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