



Health Advisory

October 11, 2019

Rabies in Fresno County

On October 9, 2019 the Fresno County Department of Public Health (FCDPH) received a report of a positive case of rabies in a domestic cat that bit a Fresno County resident. The FCDPH Environmental Health Division and Communicable Disease Investigation Programs are currently working with the family to identify any other human and animal/pet exposures.

According to the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) historical data, this is the 1st confirmed case of feline rabies in Fresno county since 1943.

The FCDPH would like to remind Health Care Providers about the importance of reporting animal bites whenever care is provided to an individual who has been in contact with saliva from an animal through a bite, open cut in the skin, or mucous membrane exposure (i.e. mouth or eyes). Fresno County continues to be identified as a rabies endemic area by the CDPH.

Rabies is a zoonotic disease of wild carnivores with sporadic spillover infection to domestic animals such as in this case. Rabies is a serious disease and is almost always fatal if not treated before symptoms appear.

Rabies remains a concern among wild mammals in Fresno County, especially among bats and skunks. While any mammal can be infected with the rabies virus, bats are the most common mammal in Fresno County that carry rabies. In 2018 and 2019 six (6) bats tested positive for rabies in Fresno County.

The FCDPH is advising all Health Care Providers to consider a bite from a wild or domestic animal to be a possible source of rabies. To report a suspected rabies case, fill out the report found here <https://is.gd/RabiesControlReport> or call FCDPH Communicable Disease Investigation Program at (559) 600-3332.

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Categories of Health Alert 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

Health Information: Provides general health information which is not considered to be of emergent nature

Promotion, preservation and protection of the community's health

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