

June 7, 2022
For Immediate Release
Contact: Lori Rowley, RN at 308-345-4223

Second Positive Rabies Case in Southwest Nebraska

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) has confirmed a second case of rabies in the health district for 2022. The positive rabies case was in a skunk in Dundy County.

In skunks and other warm-blooded animals, rabies is a deadly virus that causes inflammation of the brain. People may be exposed to rabies from saliva or blood, most commonly through a bite or contact with an infected wild animal. They may also be exposed through pets or livestock that were infected after contact with a contagious wild animal.

“Practicing animal safety as an adult teaches children to be cautious around unfamiliar or wild animals. Any animal that has not been vaccinated against rabies is at risk of getting the disease,” explains Lori Rowley RN, Public Health Nurse with SWNPHD. “If you suspect that you or a family member has been exposed to rabies, contact your medical provider right away.”

Signs of rabies in animals may include any of the following:

- Difficulty with eating or drinking
- Increased aggression
- General sickness
- Excessive drooling
- Odd behavior changes, nervousness, irritability

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), rabies is a medical urgency. Any person with a suspected exposure should wash wounds immediately with soap and water and seek medical attention from a healthcare professional right away.

Treatment to protect the exposed person from developing rabies should be given quickly after exposure. There is no treatment for rabies once a person has the disease. If an animal bites you, and it is safe to do so, catch the animal and contact your veterinarian for testing. It may save you the pain and cost of preventive treatment.

The best method to prevent human exposure is to ensure that pets, livestock, and horses are protected against rabies with current vaccinations. Contact your local veterinarian or SWNPHD regarding rabies vaccination, testing, and exposures.

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties. For more information call Lori Rowley, RN at 308-345-4223. SWNPHD is located at 404 West 10th Street in McCook and 314 West 1st Street (west door) in Ogallala. You can also follow SWNPHD on Facebook and Instagram.

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