



**TULSA HEALTH
DEPARTMENT**

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 6
JUNE 2007

Disease of the Month: Rabies

What is Rabies?

Rabies is a viral disease that affects the central nervous system.

How does a person get Rabies?

Rabies is only found in the brain, spinal cord, and saliva of an infected animal.

Transmission occurs if any of these fluids or tissues are introduced into:

- a bite or open wound (less than 24 hours old)
- a mucous membrane (eyes, mouth, lining of nose, or genitalia)

The following are **NOT** generally considered exposures to rabies:

- contact with blood or milk

- contact with urine or feces
- contact with dried saliva
- scratch from an animal claw
- petting or touching the hair of a rabid animal
- touching bowl, leashes, gates, trailers, or other surfaces the rabid animal contacted.

Which animals can get Rabies?

All mammals can contract rabies. Some common examples are: bats, skunks, raccoons, foxes, coyotes, dogs, cats, horses, and cattle.

Animals that are rarely infected are rodents (squirrels, hamsters, mice, and rats), rabbits and hares, and opossums. These animals have never been known to cause rabies in humans in the United States. Birds, reptiles (snakes, turtles, and lizards), and amphibians (frogs and toads), **do not** get rabies.



What are the symptoms of Rabies?

Most rabid animals will behave abnormally, but signs will vary. Rabid wild animals will often lose their fear of humans and nocturnal animals may be seen active during the day. Rabid animals may:

- act overexcited or angry,
- charge and bite animals, humans, or inanimate objects
- act withdrawn, and/or
- stagger or act lame or paralyzed.

Who tests for Rabies?

The only way to tell if an animal has rabies is to have the brain tested at the State Health Department Laboratory– the only lab in Oklahoma to test for rabies. The animal's brain must be intact for testing. Please do not freeze the brain.

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Special Points of Interest

DID YOU KNOW?

Every 6-8 years there is typically a rise in rabies due to skunk population increases. These years are known as epizootic years and rabies case numbers may exceed 200.

TIPS: Preventing Rabies

Have your pets and livestock vaccinated by a licensed veterinarian. An annual or 3 year rabies vaccine is available. Below are additional recommendations for preventing rabies:

- Keep dogs in a fenced yard and on a leash when walking.
- Try to keep cats inside your home, especially, at night.
- If your pet comes in contact with a bat or skunk, call your veterinarian immediately.
- Do not keep wild animals as pets.
- If you see an injured animal, domestic or wild, do not go near it. Call animal control, a veterinarian, or an animal rescue group.
- If you see an animal fight, do not break it up with your hands or feet. Use an implement such as a rake, or spray the animals with water to stop the fight.
- Teach children not to approach unfamiliar domestic and wild animals.
- Discourage wild or stray animals from coming close to your home by: keeping food out of your yard, closing trash cans, sealing chimneys, and keeping brush cleared away from buildings.

CURRENT NEWS

WHO TO CALL WHEN YOU HAVE BEEN BITTEN

The Tulsa Health Department (THD) does not investigate routine animal bites. THD becomes involved only during certain critical situations such as when a biting animal tests positive for Rabies, and it must be determined if there was human exposure to that animal.

Individuals who have been bitten are not required to report their bites to THD. Instead, they may contact the parties listed below for guidance on how to proceed:

- City of Tulsa:
(918) 669-6280
- City of Bixby:
(918) 366-8294
- City of Broken Arrow:
(918) 259-8311
- City of Glenpool:
(918) 322-8110
- City of Jenks:
(918) 299-9511
- City of Owasso:
(918) 272-4965
- City of Sand Springs:
(918) 246-2543

The Tulsa Health Department collects Emergency Room chief complaint data to monitor the emergence of illnesses, such as influenza, in our community. For additional information on THD's county-wide surveillance system please [click here](#)

REPORTED CASES OF SELECTED DISEASES

Disease	Tulsa County		Oklahoma	
	Cases Reported Year-to-Date 2007	Cases Reported Year-to-Date 2006	Cases Reported Year-to-Date 2007	Cases Reported Year-to-Date 2006
<i>Campylobacter</i>	11	12	109	122
<i>E. coli</i> O157:H7	1	3	10	15
<i>Giardia</i>	4	8	38	57
Hepatitis A	1	2	3	5
Hepatitis B	59	63	55	49
Hepatitis C	166	206	839	820
Rabies (Animal)	0	1	44	27
Salmonella	15	25	116	175
Shigella	10	0	24	40

Discrepancies between state and county numbers may result from cases being reported directly to the county. Also, Tulsa County totals for Hepatitis B includes perinatal cases.

Surveillance Report

Tulsa Health Department (THD) is currently working with two new area hospitals to integrate them into the Tulsa Area Syndromic Surveillance System (TASSS). Similar to the hospitals that currently participate in THD's syndromic surveillance system, these two hospitals will supply chief complaint data as reported by the patient during emergency room visits.

With the acquisition of emergency room data from two more hospitals, THD's syndromic surveillance system will grow from a 7-hospital reporting system, to one that receives emergency room visit data from 9 area hospitals. Data will be submitted electronically and will be analyzed under the statistical models currently used for analysis of data from the hospitals currently participating in this program.

The addition of these two hospitals brings the promise of more data that, hopefully will provide a better picture of illness patterns within the Tulsa community. The potential also exists for better geographic data and better investigation of clusters and aberrations of cases occurring in our region.