



NEWS RELEASE Mobile County Health Department

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Diagnosis of rabid cat in Mobile prompts reminder to immunize pets

The diagnosis of a rabid cat from the 36693 ZIP code area in Mobile has prompted public health officials to encourage pet owners to be sure their dogs, cats and ferrets are vaccinated against the fatal disease.

Dr. Bert Eichold, Health Officer, cautions people not to approach stray animals, wildlife and bats.

“If a wild or stray animal is found around your home, it is best to contact animal control professionals,” he says.

State law requires that dogs, cats and ferrets remain currently vaccinated against rabies. Some vaccines are effective for one year, and some are effective for three years. Check with your veterinarian for more information. Vaccination of domestic dogs, cats and ferrets not only protects the animals against rabies, but also creates a protective buffer between wildlife rabies and humans.

There will be a rabies clinic Saturday, July 31, at the City of Mobile Animal Shelter, 855 Owens St., from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m., or later if vaccine is still available. The vaccine is effective for one year. The cost of the shots will be \$10 per pet payable in cash.

Rabies is a disease of all mammals, including man, and is fatal if not properly prevented by a series of injections. The primary means of exposure is through a bite or scratch with contaminated saliva contacting the wound. Transmission of the deadly virus also occurs if saliva contacts a mucous membrane such as the eye or mouth.

The most consistent clinical sign of rabies in animals is an observable change from normal behavior. Any wild animals that suddenly appear friendly, docile or approach humans should be considered suspect of being infected, and therefore avoided. Nocturnal animals such as raccoons and foxes that become active in the daytime should also be avoided. Several exposures occur each year in Alabama when children or pets approach these wild animals which have wandered into their yard.

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