



Cochise County Health and Social Services

Public Programs...Personal Service
www.cochise.az.gov

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Director

*** * * MEDIA RELEASE * * ***

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: *Rabies Awareness Tips for Healthy Summertime Fun*

Long days and agreeable weather make almost everyone want to spend more time out of doors. Cochise Health and Social Services routinely encourages outdoor activity, but wants to remind residents this means they are also naturally more likely to encounter wild animals. To prevent the spread of rabies and other diseases, it is important to always use caution when interacting with wild animals, or any animal exhibiting unusual behavior.

Tips to prevent the spread of rabies and other diseases include:

- Make sure your pet's vaccinations are up-to-date in accordance with all veterinarian-recommended schedules
- Never approach or touch any wild animal
- Stay aware and alert when hiking, camping, or enjoying the outdoors

In Cochise County, twenty-one skunks have tested positive for rabies since January 1, 2016. So far, no domestic animals have tested positive for rabies.

Rabies is most often transmitted through the bite of a rabid animal. The rabies virus attacks the central nervous system, causing encephalitis, and the condition is always fatal once symptoms appear. Rabies can be prevented in persons who have come into contact or have been bitten by wild animals through prompt administration of anti-rabies vaccine. Hundreds of rabies treatments are initiated annually in Arizona to prevent rabies from developing after exposure.

While any mammal can carry rabies, bats present the most common source of rabies exposures to humans in Arizona because rabid bats often fall to the ground where they are easily accessible to people and pets. If you believe you may have been exposed to a rabid animal, you should seek immediate medical attention from your doctor or a hospital emergency department. If the animal is available, also contact the local animal control agency.

For further information on rabies prevention, please see <http://www.cdc.gov/rabies/prevention/index.html>.

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About Cochise Health and Social Services

On behalf of the Board of Supervisors, Cochise Health and Social Services promotes health and quality of life for all Cochise County residents through community partnerships, education, service, and leadership. For more information, including recent media releases, please visit our website at <https://www.cochise.az.gov/health-and-social-services/home>.

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