

Aug. 7, 2017

RABIES ALERT ISSUED FOR NORTHWEST OCALA/MARION COUNTY

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OCALA, Fla.— The Florida Department of Health in Marion County has issued a rabies alert for Marion County. This is in response to a bite from an infected cat on July 31.

This rabies alert is for 60 days and includes the following area boundaries:

- North U.S. Highway 27 to the north
- West Highway 40 to the south
- Northwest 80th Avenue to the east
- Northwest 120th Avenue to the west

The public is asked to maintain a heightened awareness that rabies is active in the area. Domestic animals are at risk if they are not vaccinated; rabies is always a danger in wild animal populations. An animal with rabies could infect other wild or domestic animals that have not received a rabies vaccination. Alerts are designed to increase public awareness, but they should not give residents a false sense of security if their neighborhood has not been named in the alert.

Rabies is a disease of the nervous system and is fatal to humans and warm-blooded animals. The only treatment for human exposure to rabies is rabies-specific immune globulin and rabies immunization. Appropriate treatment started soon after the exposure will protect an exposed person from the disease.

Individuals who have been bitten or scratched by wild or domestic animals should seek medical attention and report the injury to the Florida Department of Health in Marion County at 352-629-0137. If your pet is bitten by a wild animal, seek immediate veterinary assistance for the animal, and contact Marion County Animal Services at 352-671-8727.

Residents and visitors are advised to take the following precautions:

- Avoid all contact with wildlife, particularly raccoons, bats, foxes, skunks, otters, bobcats and coyotes. Never adopt wild animals or bring them into your home.
- Teach children to **never** handle unfamiliar animals, wild or domestic, even if they appear friendly.
- Do not feed or unintentionally attract wild animals with open garbage cans or trash.
- Keep rabies vaccinations up-to-date for all pets.
- Keep pets under direct supervision so they do not come into contact with wild animals.
- Prevent bats from entering living quarters or occupied spaces in homes, churches, schools, and other similar areas where they might encounter people and pets.

For more information on rabies, go to www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/rabies or call the Florida Department of Health in Marion County at 352-629-0137 or Marion County Animal Services at 352-671-8727.

About the Florida Department of Health

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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