

For immediate release:  
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## **Rabies Confirmed in Taos County Skunk Department of Health Reminds Public to Vaccinate Animals**

(Santa Fe) -- The New Mexico Department of Health reported today that a skunk from Taos County tested positive for rabies, and a pet dog exposed to the infected skunk is receiving a booster dose of rabies vaccine to prevent it from developing the deadly viral disease.

The skunk attacked the dog and was very aggressive before it died. This is the second skunk from Taos County that has tested positive for rabies this year. These are the first rabies positive skunks from Taos County looking back at records since 1966.

Rabies is a fatal disease if it is not treated before symptoms develop. The Department of Health reminds people that it is important to vaccinate their animals to protect them from rabies.

“The movement of skunk rabies into Taos County should serve as a wake-up call to people who have pets, horses and other livestock that there are wild animals in the area infected with rabies,” said Dr. Paul Ettestad, the Department’s public health veterinarian. “Owners of valuable livestock should consult with their veterinarian about protecting these animals by giving them rabies vaccine. Animals can die if they are not vaccinated and are bitten by a rabid animal.”

### **It is easy to prevent rabies by taking the following precautions:**

- Do not handle wild animals. Feed your pets indoors and do not toss table scraps into your yard.
- Teach your children to stay away from wild animals or animals they don’t know.
- If skunks or other wild animals are lurking around your yard and acting sick or abnormal contact your local animal control department.
- Supervise your pets to prevent exposure. Obey leash laws and keep your pets restrained.
- If another person’s pet bites your pet, try to find the owner. Contact your local animal control department and call your veterinarian, even if the wound is superficial.

### **If you are bitten or scratched, follow these guidelines:**

- Wash all wounds and contact areas thoroughly with soap and water.
- Contact your physician immediately for evaluation. The Department of Health is available to physicians for consultation about rabies 24/7/365 at 505-827-0006.
- Call the local animal control department to report the incident; provide them with an accurate description of the animal.
- Try to keep the animal confined, but don’t risk further injury if the animal is dangerous.
- Keep children away from all animals involved.

For more information about rabies in New Mexico, check out the Department of Health’s website:  
[www.health.state.nm.us](http://www.health.state.nm.us).