



## **RABIES**

Let's be clear....there is NO CURE for Rabies. If a person is bitten by a rabid animal, the only course of action is to start post exposure shots with in the 10 day period after the bite. Rabies is found in every state of our country except Hawaii. Therefore, we must continue to vaccinate our pets to protect them from this disease. Local municipalities run free rabies clinics for dogs and cats throughout the year. Hanover Township runs theirs in the month of November.

Be advised that in New Jersey, cats account for the vast majority of domestic animal cases while raccoons are the most common wild animal carrier of rabies. Many times, the local health department can quarantine an animal that has bitten to observe signs of rabies. If that animal stays healthy for the quarantine period of 10 days, we know there was no rabies virus involved. If however, the quarantined animal shows signs of illness or dies within the 10 day period, its brain tissue will be analyzed for rabies. Testing brain tissue is the ONLY way to confirm the disease.

In our area, we also take exposure to bats quite seriously. Although unprovoked bats are not likely to bite, we always test them if they are found in a bedroom where someone was sleeping. Bat bites can be very small and difficult to detect, so if a possible exposure has occurred, the bat should be captured and analyzed for rabies.

In September, we settle in to our routine of school and prepping the house for the cold weather. When filling out all the forms for the students as they start school, take a minute to check on the paperwork for your pets as well. Dog and cat licenses are renewed every January in Hanover Township. The rabies vaccine must be current, so if your pet is due, remember to visit the vet or watch for the November Free Clinic.

Also, check the outside of your house. Any holes or openings in the eaves can mean bat entry. Be sure your chimney is capped properly and check your attic for spots of light shining through where it shouldn't.

Most importantly, NEVER try to feed or get close to a wild animal. If you observe a wild animal out in the day time or acting suspiciously, call either our animal control officers at 973-377-2295 or the Hanover Township Police Dept at 973-428-2511. Notify the Hanover Township Health Department of any bites immediately at 973-428-2484.