

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE DATE: August 17, 2015	Contact: Ryan Tekac
	Title: Director, Environmental Health Division
	Phone: (330) 270-2855 ext. 108
	Email: rtekac@mahoninghealth.org

ANNUAL RACCOON-RABIES VACCINATION BAITING BEGINS IN MAHONING COUNTY August 20-21, 2015

Rabies is a viral infection that can affect the nervous system of any mammal, including humans. It is almost always fatal. Rabies can spread rapidly and infect large numbers of raccoons making human exposure a concern. To stop the spread of raccoon-rabies variant (RRV), the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) is currently working with federal, state, and local agencies to conduct their annual raccoon-rabies baiting operation.

Rabies baiting operations are intended to create an immune barrier along Ohio's state lines to prevent the spread of RRV into the rest of the state. Baiting will take place in 12 northeastern Ohio counties between August 19 to September 11. Baits will be distributed by aircraft, helicopter, and vehicles staffed by USDA and staff from the local health departments. Residents should be aware of low-flying aircraft and baits should be left alone. Ground baiting will take place in Mahoning County on August 20 and August 21, 2015.

Baits and Humans

- Know what the baits look like. The plastic sachet, which will be distributed by aircraft, is about the size of a ketchup packet. It is white and rolled in a brown fishmeal glaze. In urban areas, where baits will be distributed by vehicle, the sachet will be inside a hard, brown fishmeal block, about 2-x-2-inch square. [Photos of the baits can be found on our website.](#)
- If baits are found in areas frequented by pets or children, toss them into a fence row, woodlot, ditch, or other raccoon habitat areas. Damaged baits should be bagged and disposed in the trash.
- Wear gloves, plastic bag, or use a towel if handling bait. Although there is no harm to touching damaged bait, they have a strong fishmeal smell.
- Wash hands and any exposed skin thoroughly with soap and water if exposed to the vaccine (liquid).



- Exposure to people who have skin, mucous membrane or eye contact with vaccine, as well as those who have eczema, have exposed breaks in skin, are pregnant, or are immunocompromised should seek medical attention if they experience any rash, fever, sore throat, headache, conjunctivitis, vomiting or diarrhea within 21 days of the exposure.
- In the event of human or pet contact with the bait/vaccine, call the Rabies Information line at 614-752-1029, option 4, call the Mahoning County District Board of Health at 330-270-2855 or Youngstown City Health Department at (330) 743 - 3333.

Baits and Pets

- Once your area is baited, keep dogs and cats inside or on leashes for up to five days. Most baits disappear within 4 days; however, it is important that raccoons have every opportunity to eat them.
- Dogs in particular are attracted to the baits and will occasionally eat them. A few baits are not harmful to pets, although vomiting and diarrhea have occurred after pets have ingested multiple baits.
- Do not attempt to take remove bait from an animal's mouth, as you could be bitten.

In Ohio (Ohio Administrative Code 1501:31-15-03), it is illegal to live trap, move and release raccoons. Anyone dealing with a nuisance raccoon cannot relocate the animal. There are only two legal options for nuisance raccoons: euthanize or release on the same property where they were live trapped. Uninformed people who are relocating nuisance raccoons may be contributing to rabies crossing the barrier.

The rabies virus is found in the saliva of affected animals, most often raccoons, skunks and bats, and is spread when saliva from an infected animal gets into a wound or mucous membrane (such as the eye or mouth). Animal bites are the most common route of exposure. Bats, raccoons, and skunks pose the greatest risk of rabies in Ohio. To protect your family against this deadly disease:

- Avoid contact with wild animals and animals you do not know.
- Vaccinate your pets against rabies and keep them current on their shots.
- If bitten, call your doctor. If your pet has contact with a wild animal, call your veterinarian.
- Rabies exposures should also be reported to your local health department.

###



50 Westchester Drive, Youngstown, Ohio 44515
 Phone: 330-270-2855 or Toll-Free: 1-800-873-MCHD
www.mahoninghealth.org

