



NIAGARA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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PRESS RELEASE

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A North Tonawanda citizen notified the Niagara County Department of Health Division of Environmental Health (NCDOHEH) last evening of another coyote encounter in the city. The victim was walking home from the store around 10:00 p.m. Monday evening in the area of the old Wurlitzer Plant on Niagara Falls Boulevard, when he was approached by a coyote and bitten.

The NCDOHEH contacted the City of North Tonawanda and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) immediately after it was notified of the incident. The NYSDEC has advised City Police that a coyote of concern can be euthanized if the environment is safe to do so. The NCDOHEH is prepared to send brain tissue from dead coyotes for rabies testing. Any coyote encounters should be reported to the NCDOHEH at 439-7444 and to the North Tonawanda Police Department at 692-4111. Contacting both departments will allow the NCDOHEH and the North Tonawanda Police Department to work together to address both, public health and public safety matters. In New York State, rabies in coyotes is rare; over the past ten years a total of 7 rabid coyotes has been documented in New York State. The NYSDEC, in conjunction with Cornell University is currently studying coyotes and coyote/human encounters to find the best ways to reduce the incidence of these occurrences ([website www.nycoyote.org/](http://www.nycoyote.org/)).

NCDOH Director of Environmental Health, James Devald issues the following recommendations to prevent exposure to rabies from wildlife and domestic animals:

1. Do not feed, touch or adopt wild animals, stray dogs or feral cats.
2. Be sure your dogs and cats are up-to-date on their rabies vaccinations. Vaccinated pets serve as a buffer between rabid wildlife and man. Protect them, and you may reduce your risk of exposure to rabies. Dogs and cats that receive rabies vaccine after three months of age are protected for a one year period. Revaccinations are effective for up to three years. Pets too young to be vaccinated should be kept indoors. The Niagara County Department of Health will conduct the next free rabies clinic on May 16, 2009 at the Cornell Cooperative Extension on 4487 Lake Avenue in Lockport from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
3. Keep family pets indoors at night. Don't leave them outside unattended or let them roam free.
4. Don't attract wild animals to your home or yard. Keep your property free of stored bird seed or other foods which may attract wild animals. Feed pets indoors. Tightly cover, or put away garbage cans. Board up any openings to your attic, basement, porch or garage. Cap your chimney with screens.
5. Encourage children to immediately tell adults if they are bitten by any animals. Tell children not to touch any animals they do not know.
6. Report all animal bites or contact with wild animals to the Niagara County Department of Health at 439-7444 or 439-7430 after hours.

PUBLIC HEALTH: PREVENT. PROMOTE. PROTECT.

7. If a wild animal is on your property, let it wander away. Bring children and pets indoors and alert neighbors that are outside. You may contact a nuisance wildlife control officer who will remove the animal for a fee or if there is danger, or you can call your local law enforcement agency.
8. If your pet has been in a fight with another animal, wear gloves to handle it. Isolate it from other animals and people for several hours. Call your veterinarian. Your vaccinated pet will need a booster dose of rabies vaccine within five days of the exposure. Unvaccinated animals exposed to a known or suspected rabid animal must be confined for six months or humanely destroyed.

Further information on rabies can be obtained from the Niagara County Department of Health at 439-7444. Further information on coyotes can be obtained from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation at 851-7010.