



NEWS RELEASE

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RABID CAT

The Niagara County Department of Health is still seeking the person who dropped off a 10 to 12 week-old grayish-brown, Himalayan/Siamese mix cat at 7347 Gow Road in the Town of Newfane last week. As noted in the August 13, 2010 press release, the cat was found to be rabid. The Niagara County Department of Health has serious concern for any individuals who handled or had contact with the cat within the past few weeks. Humans who are scratched, bitten or exposed to saliva from rabid animals can develop rabies infection. To prevent rabies, exposed individuals must get care before symptoms develop. Symptoms in humans may take from several days to more than a year to appear. After the symptoms of rabies appear, the disease is nearly always fatal. The virus damages the central nervous system, which includes the brain and spinal cord.

Symptoms include pain and numbness at the site of the bite followed by other signs and symptoms that are often confused with those of other conditions. These include:

- Fever
- Cough or sore throat
- Pain, burning, itching, tingling, or numbness at the site of the bite or original exposure
- Abdominal pain
- Anxiety or restlessness that gradually gets worse and may become extreme agitation
- Hallucinations
- Delirium
- Fear of water (hydrophobia) or fear of air (aerophobia)
- Muscle spasms in the face, neck, and/or diaphragm, followed by seizures
- Paralysis
- Wide fluctuations in temperature, pulse, and blood pressure
- Coma
- Heart and respiratory failure

Medical care to prevent rabies is advised as soon as possible after an exposure occurs. The Niagara County Department of Health needs to evaluate the individual(s) who may have been exposed to this rabid cat.

It is urgent that the person or persons come forward immediately to allow the Health Department to complete the evaluation to determine the need for post-exposure rabies treatment. Please call **439-7444** during normal working hours, 8:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M., or **439-7430**, during off hours.

PUBLIC HEALTH: PREVENT. PROMOTE. PROTECT