

Title: Rabies and Animal Bite Prevention**Time Duration: 30 minutes****Overview****What is Rabies?**

Rabies is a very serious infection of the nervous system that is caused by a virus. Rabies is usually transmitted by a bite or scratch from an infected animal. Infections can also occur when saliva from a rabid animal comes in contact with an open wound or with the eyes or other mucous membranes such as the mouth. Humans who develop a rabies infection often have a history of being bitten, scratched or licked by an infected animal about a month before rabies symptoms began. Early symptoms of rabies include fever, headache, sore throat, and feeling tired. As the virus gets to the brain, the person may act nervous, confused, and upset. Once people develop rabies symptoms, they almost always enter a coma and die. This is why it is very important for a person to see a doctor right away if an animal bites them.

Some Facts about Rabies and Dog Bites in New York City

- Wildlife such as raccoons, skunks, bats, and foxes are the most commonly infected animals.
- Mammals, such as dogs, cats, and humans can get rabies. Rabies can kill animals and humans.
- Animals with rabies are sick and will bite other animals and humans.
- Children have the highest rates of dog bites reported in New York City.
- Most rabid animals found in New York City are raccoons.

How do you know if an animal is Rabid?

- The animal may be aggressive and bite or scratch without warning.
- The animal may look sick or angry, have trouble walking, or may behave strangely.

What should a person do if they get bitten or exposed to rabies?

- Children should tell an adult right away if they have been bitten or scratched by an animal or pet.
- Wash the wound with soap and water and see a doctor right away.
- If there is a possibility of a rabies infection, the doctor will give the person rabies vaccine (anti-rabies shots) to fight off the disease. Rabies shots need to be given as soon as possible, before symptoms appear.
- One shot is given in the area near the bite, and the rest are given in the arm. The vaccination consists of a series for six shots given over 30 days. Without these shots, a person infected with rabies could die.

For more information on Rabies, see the NYCDOHMH [Rabies Fact Sheet](#).

5 Key Prevention Messages for Students

- Stay away from stray dogs and cats.
- Don't go near wild animals, even ones that look friendly (i.e. raccoons, skunks, bats, or foxes).
- Ask your parents if your pets have received their rabies shots.
- Keep outdoor trashcans tightly covered and don't leave pet food outside.
- Tell an adult right away if a wild animal, a dog, cat, or any animal bites or scratches you or your pet.

Objectives**Students will:**

1. Learn that rabies is very serious and can make animals and people very sick.
2. Learn that people who get rabies and do not get medicine in time could die.
3. Be able to identify animals that could have rabies.
4. Learn five (5) ways to help prevent rabies and animal bites.

Materials

[Activity Sheets for Grades K-6](#) (Note: K-1 activity requires crayons) [Answer Key](#) (Teacher's Copy)

[Supplemental Sheet](#)

[Rabies Fact Sheet](#)

Activities and Procedures

- Use the information from the overview section and the [Rabies Fact Sheet](#) to introduce the topic of Rabies and Animal Bite prevention. Emphasize the 5 Key Prevention Messages.
- Use the examples on the [Supplemental Sheet](#) to create discussions and/or role-plays.
- Choose an appropriate handout for your class. Assist the students in completing the activities as necessary.

Conclusion**Reinforce Main Messages**

- The best way to avoid rabies and animal bites is to stay away from strays and wild animals.
- Kids should never be afraid to tell an adult if they have been bitten, scratched, or licked by a wild or stray animal.